



Weird Stuff by Genesis.Malfoy

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Summary: CH 10: "The way she looks at him made Mike feel invincible, as if he was a treasure. Eleven made him feel incredible, incomparable, irreplaceable and so powerful he knew he could do everything as long as she is there." [A/N] Just a bunch of one shots from Mike and Eleven relationship. Every chapter has its own rating. Read and review, please. Post Season 2/Pre Season 3!

1. Mike's Mint

A/N Hi everyone! Welcome to my new project. This multi-chapter will focus on Mike and Eleven's relationship, building their lives together. Each chapter will be a small one-shot or a drabble and, even when they won't be in chronologic order, it'll all be connected. Also, if you have read my individual long one-shots, you already know that and you probably find a lot of references of those one-shots too. By the way, I'll continue publishing one-shots besides the ones I'll publish in here. So, don't worry.

*I hope you guys like this new idea and tell me what you think on every new chapter. I always want to entertain all of you so feel free to pm me if you have any special request or doubts. Also I'll upload frequently **as long as I get feedback**, this is very important to me. And I have many, many ideas with so much Mileven, it's insane.*

IMPORTANT: *Each chapter has its own rating, so keep in mind that even if the fanfic says it's T rated, that doesn't mean there won't be K, K+, T and M rated chapter too. So keep in mind each rating, just in case.*

That said, I hope you like this.

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I make no profits on writing this.

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Rated: T. / Romance - Hurt/Comfort. / Eleven, Mike – mentioned –, OC.

xx

MIKE'S MINT

November 3rd, 1989.

It's amazing what being in love causes.

One lives, from the moment of waking up to the sleeping time, thinking about that person one loves. You can run through the events of the day in constant connexion with that special someone but, to Eleven, it wasn't like that. She didn't just live with Mike's face burned

in her heart from the moment she'd open her eyes until she went to bed, she also saw his face in her dreams. Every single room in the cabin had his scent, just like every inch of her body had his touch all over it, with the lines and invisible drawing he made with the tip of his fingers when he played with the softness of her skin and his firm passionate touches from all those time when they've been intimate.

She lived with his voice in her ears, with his eyes cutting through her own, with his lips tasting her with both tender kisses and those deep steamy ones that always left his mark when desire filled their bodies in the cabin, or at his house in his bedroom or the basement.

To Eleven, every single moment she lived with Mike by her side was a whisper of fresh air, an eternal moment of happiness so beautiful, so free, like the leaves when they flew away from the trees and got carried away by the fall's wind. A natural, wonderful moment of magic, love and fantasy like the dates they had, after their nap on Fridays.

Those Friday's dates were her favourite part of the week, their 7 p.m. tradition to the ice cream shop since she started school with them in 1985 after she begun enjoying a regular, normal life. Every Friday after school, El and Mike went to his house and, after doing their homework, they'd laid under the fort and talked, made out or simply took a nap until few minutes before seven, when they would leave his house and she'd climb behind him on his bike – and after he got his car, drove with him –; to 'Lover's Delight' ice cream shop and they enjoyed their very simple but sweet little date.

A cone with lemon mousse and mint for Mike, and another cone with chocolate and strawberry cream for Eleven. Always the same flavours, always just the two of them, no matter the season of the year, no matter the weather, they always went there to their innocent tradition before he'd take El back to her house. She loved those dates, just the two of them.

Well, it used to be just the two of them, until September when Mike left to college.

Every time Eleven went to her Friday's 'date' since then, she felt particularly sad. She hadn't told Mike she kept on going because she

didn't wanted to make him feel bad, worse actually from how he already felt because he went so far away. No matter how much they talked about it, no matter how many times she told him she understood, no matter how many times she told him she would wait for him; every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday when Mike called El, after an hour of talking and before they had to hang up, his voice would always tremble and he'd apologize for studying in another state; like if it was his fault, like if he had to feel remorse from all his hard work. And Eleven always tried to cheer him up telling him that it was okay, that she would always understand because he was working that hard to build a future that, in the end, would be theirs to share.

- Do you know how I would love to be with you right now, don't you?
– he used to say when they had to hang up and she couldn't help but smile thinking about how sweet he was, always reminding her how much he loved her.

Those calls became a need, those calls helped her live through the days having small goals: to resist until the next one when she would refuel her doss of Mike, when she would gather a little more strength, when he would also feel a little less sad and he would study harder and better, when she would feel a little less cold until the Christmas break when he would return to her arms for four glorious weeks in which they would filled with one another after months of hunger, easing the urges of their bodies and filling the emptiness of their souls, forgetting about the world and focusing on the one and only truth: the way they loved each other.

- Good afternoon, Jane. – greeted Stella Deveraux, owner of the ice cream shop, smiling behind the register.

After so many Fridays going with her boyfriend to have some delicious ice cream, Mrs. Deveraux already knew their time and tastes. She even asked them a few times, with a kind grandmotherly smile, white hair and warm blue eyes, why they never changed their flavours. Those times they only smiled and shrugged, not knowing what to say other than they loved lemon, strawberry, mint and chocolate. Both of them because, before heading back home, Mike and Eleven liked to made out for a good uninterrupted ten minutes when they could taste each other's flavours in their mouths. If the

popular phrase 'sucking face' ever made any sense that was when.

Eleven said hi back with a small but honest smile while opening her purse and paid for her ice cream cone. Two seconds later one of employees at the shop, the only one she saw actually, got closer to her with the same creepy smile he'd been giving to her since a few weeks back, making her feel uncomfortable.

- Chocolate and mint cream, please. – she whispered, avoiding eye contact.

- Yeah, I remember. – he replied, showing a big smile but El just stared back at him with a frown and looked away, disgusted.

The employee, which name she believed was Jason but she didn't remember and, quite frankly, she didn't care, had been in the same English class with them according to Mike, who pointed out one day. Eleven knew exactly what was on that guy's mind and why he had been smiling at her like that, especially since she started to go there without her boyfriend but she always tried to be as clear as possible to let him know she wasn't interested. El never smiled back to him, she never talked to him, she didn't even looked at him other than the absolute minimum; and, let's be honest, she kind of hated him too because every time he had to make her cone, she could feel how he wanted to undress her. Eleven never thought she'd feel such revulsion towards someone besides Papa, and also she hated that guy because the way he always looked at her made her lonely dates even harder than they already were. When Mike comes back, she would tell him to put that guy into place.

- Take it slowly, Jane. It's really big. – said 'probably Jason', giving her her cone with extra double meaning sauce.

She couldn't help but narrow her eyes and frown, looking pissed. – Yeah. – she said, clearly annoyed.

El turned around taking two paper napkins, thinking where to sit. That day, the ice cream shop was empty which was particularly amazing given that, even during winter, the place was overcrowded whether if it was summer because of the ice cream, spring with milkshakes or coffee and cakes during the cold seasons. One day

Mike made a joke about changing the name of the shop from 'Lover's Delight' to *Come and Get Fat*. She had laughed at that.

- Hey, Jane. Would you give me your number? – 'probably Jason' asked, pulling her out of her thoughts. She turned around and looked at him, very pissed, ready to tell him he was out of place and ask him if he had been eating funny mushrooms, because if he thought she was interested, he clearly had been hallucinating.

- Jacob, that's enough. I told you a thousand times to leave our customers alone and learn your place. This is the last warning. – said Mrs. Deveraux, clapping her hands loudly and pushing him away from the counter. – Get back with the boys, go on, shoo.

The guy simply stared back at both women and mumbled something that could've been *bitches* before heading back to the back of the shop. Eleven relaxed, satisfied thanks to the old lady who rescued her from that unpleasant moment and she felt a small wave of care towards her.

- Sorry about that, Jane. Sadly guys like him are the ones guilty of giving your generation a bad name. – the woman apologized and signed a seat before her, showing Eleven where to sit. – Come here, dear, keep me company.

The girl looked around again to the empty store, the quite streets and noticed again that the other employees were nowhere in sight. She sat where the older lady pointed and started eating her ice cream.

- Slow day?

Mrs. Deveraux sweet laugh made Eleven forget about that douchebag from two minutes ago. – Not at all, dear. Only half hour ago we had a line of a hundred people, buying their ice creams to go. The boys worked really hard so I let them stay in the back watching the big game.

That made sense.

- Right, my dad said something last night about it. He must have returned home earlier to watch the game and do some serious

shouting to the TV.

The older lady laughed again. – He sure deserves a break; it's not easy to be the Chief, even if it's Hawkins's. How is he, dear?

- He is fine, thank you. Actually, my dad's girlfriend Joyce and I have him on a diet, so if you ask him he'd say he is suffering from hunger.
– El said. – I think he hate us.

Both women giggled, which caused Eleven to relax completely and enjoy her ice cream. Mrs. Deveraux walked to the espresso machine and poured her a cup of coffee, obviously convinced she had time to spare before another customer walks in.

- How about you, little one? Are you okay?

Her soft sweet voice asked almost carefully, afraid she might touch a sensitive nerve and that took Eleven by surprise, looking at her with confusion and curiosity.

- These last few weeks I have noticed you coming alone, at the same day and the same hour. You take your cone of a different flavour and remain silent on the furthest table of the shop and eat it slowly... And a little sad, if I may add.

The woman's words took a few seconds to be digest while Eleven saw herself in the eyes of that lady in front of her and how she seemed to be worrying about her being all alone.

- So, you and Mike..?

Eleven cut her off before she could even say the words. She didn't even want to hear it.

- Oh no, not at all. – El answered, shaking her head and offering a small smile, drawing little circles on her ice cream. Somehow the woman seemed relieved and El couldn't help but to think about how sweet that seventy something years old woman was. – He's in college.

- Oh right! I should've thought about it, I still remember the day when you guys graduated and, still wearing your academic robes and caps, you kids came here on your date. You looked so cute. – she

said, smiling sincerely. – Where did he go, if you don't mind me asking?

El shook her head, smiling back to her. She always enjoyed talking about Mike because she was so proud of him. – He was accepted on MIT, full scholarship.

- Oh wow, that's... far. – said the woman, surprised. – It must be very difficult for you, kids, to be so far away from each other.

It wasn't a question and Eleven just nodded. Suddenly she felt the bitter taste of nostalgia and also the need to talk about it and about Mike.

- You didn't want to study?

Eleven shook her head, actually Mike had insisted that she should apply to get into college because she was really smart but, to her, the mere idea of leaving Hawkins on her own scared the crap out of her – and Hopper – so they both agreed it was best for her to stay home. For the time being, Eleven was working on Mr. Keene's drugstore, three blocks away from the ice cream shop and right across the street of Radio Shack where Mike used to work during high school. She surrounded herself with everything that could bring his presence back to her, it was soothed her.

- Maybe when he graduates and finishes his master degree, but I'm not sure if I want to. Although... - she giggle at the thought. – If I know him enough, he will insist so much that I will probably end up studying something.

Mrs. Deveraux smiled behind her cup of coffee. – Well, he just wants the best for you. That boy sure loves you. You know, in the many years I lived and, especially since I own this shop, I've seen thousands of couples but I've never seen love so sincere like the one you kids have. – she said – The way that boy follows you, and watches you. The way he smiles at you and cares about you makes me think that, even when I always believed that teens can't really understand what real love feels like; you kids are the rare exception to that.

El didn't dare to look at her when she said all those things because

that woman was speaking so accurately, even when she barely knew them. She was talking about her relationship with her boyfriend like if she'd known them like the back of her hand. Eleven knew for sure, after all those years, that Mike loved her just as much as she loved him. The worked liked that, no every day routine was alike, there was no boredom and they knew how to surprise each other daily. They shared naps after school, they enjoyed some quality time on a hammock in the cabin on the afternoon, he'd made up a song to her for her birthday and she always sniff the scent on his neck when she'd hold him from behind in his bike or, when he got his car, she'd nuzzle on his neck while he drove her to her house. Mike was his source of energy, the breath in her lungs, the wind beneath her wings and the floor she'd walked in.

- I love him so much... – she whispered, playing with the plastic spoon, drawing little hearts on the union between the chocolate and the mint before taking another lick. And she also tried to swallow the lump of tears suddenly squeezing her throat, trying not to look up and show Mrs. Deveraux her watering eyes.

But she noticed and placed a warm, soothing hand on her arm and, when El looked up, she met those caring blue eyes behind thick glasses and she understood for a second, what it felt to have a grandmother.

- It's okay, dear. You can let it go; Stella can hold your back. That's what ice cream is for; you think its only coincidence that movies have so many ice cream scenes when someone's is feeling blue?

El laughed and let two tears fell from her big dark eyes, the tears she had been holding back since a few seconds ago or, perhaps, since the last eight weeks, she wasn't sure which. Even when she had cried when Mike left for college, she didn't really cried *that* much. Actually she had to gather all her strength to not explode into waves of tears because she wanted to be strong for him, but that only caused her to shut down from the world. Not only she didn't shed a single tear after he left, but also – and apparently was even worse – she had entered in a state of hypnosis where she functioned like she was a robot; Eleven saw movies with Hopper, went to work, ate, showered but it was all like if she was watching everything like if her life was a TV show.

Life itself was like the void she had visited so many times when they were apart. Only when she went to bed she finally felt like waking up because, every night, she'd dream about Mike and life became good again, she'd dream about his kisses and his voice, his hands and his touch. Her dreams were her refugee; it was another source of power to refuel her heart with the necessary energies to hang on until the next phone call. Those eight o'clock calls on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays made her heart skip a thousands beats and she never let it ring more than twice because El almost threw herself onto it like if her life depends on it and she hold it tight against her ear until Mike's voice filled her heart again and she could almost see the smiled he made when she said hi to him. They filled each other with love, they remembered each other their love, and they held each other until the next phone call.

But, until then, she never cried again and she never thought she would let her tears run free in the presence of the owner of her favourite ice cream shop; a woman she barely knew, truth be told.

And she cried. A lot.

- That's okay, little one, let it go. It's alright to feel like that, believe me I know.

After some minutes, Eleven wiped her tears with the sleeve of her hoodie, – Mike's hoodie, actually –, and looked back at the woman who so sweetly supported her. A small smiled crossed her face and then looked confused by the last thing the lady said.

- My husband. – she said, pointing to a frame picture on the wall behind the espresso machine. On the photograph there was a man, around the same age of Mrs. Deveraux, with a kind smile. – He died two years ago but we were married for over fifty and, you know, there was a time before we got married when we were apart for three years. Actually three years and fifty three days, I remember those days vividly because during that whole time I lived afraid I might get a letter in which it'd say that he would never come back.

The girl listened carefully before asking. – He went to college too?

- No, dear. He fought in the war.

War. Eleven remembered they studied about it at school, they even had to make an essay about it and she shivered thinking about the images she saw on the books.

- I'm sorry, you've been through some serious stuff during a horrible time and I'm wiping because my boyfriend is in college on a fifteen hours drive away from here.

- You don't have to apologize, little Jane. – said the older lady and squeezed her hand on El's arm tenderly. – It's only natural to feel the way you do, trust me. I told you that so you know someone understands because, even when I'm a lot older than you, I know exactly what you are going through.

- It's just that... – she said, fighting the tears that were pouring out of her eyes, feeling a little stupid because she knew Mike didn't leave her, because even when he was 808 miles away, he was still *hers*. – Can it possibly feel this hard? Or is it just me acting like a baby?

Mrs. Deveraux sighed before answering. – Being away from someone you love is one of the hardest things in the world. – she said. – I know you may feel like you are never going to see him again but, when two people love each for real, it's a challenge to resist. You have to put a goal to focus on. You have to be sure about your feelings so you can set the future you want to reach. You love him, right?

- Yes. – Eleven answered with tears but without any hesitation. – I love Mike, I love him with all my heart and I know he loves me, he always been clear about that.

- Tell me about it, dear. It'll help.

Her voice was peace between the storm in which El's mind was currently into, caused by how much she missed her boyfriend. Eleven told Mrs. Deveraux, while eating her ice cream, that Mike called her three times a week for an hour. She told her about the first time he told her he loved her and the song he wrote and played for her. She told her about their first kiss and, without much detail, about the first time they made love. She didn't tell her about the lab, or the demogorgon, or her powers, or about all the stuff that were top

secret; but she did tell her that Mike came to her life to show her how true pure happiness was like, that he changed her life into a perfect one. El told her about their relationship while the older woman's smile grew wider while she kept speaking and she also felt something wonderful holding her up, while those warm blue eyes behind thick glasses looked back into her eyes, providing the support El didn't know she had been asking for.

- I'm sorry, you must be bored. – Eleven apologized, cleaning her tears again with the sleeve.

The lady shook her head and patted her arm tenderly. – Not at all, dear. I think you kids have the most beautiful story I have ever heard. A precious girl waiting for the boy she loves, and a sweet caring boy who earned that love every day.

Eleven smiled a little ashamed but flattered while finishing her cone, taking the last spoons of mint. – That's why I changed my flavour. – she said, showing her the empty cone. – I always choose chocolate, and Mike always chooses mint, so taking his favourite flavour with mine, it's like if I'm eating it with him... Until he comes back.

Stella Deveraux thought that no soap operas could ever be as sweet and loving as the girl sitting in front of her.

- That's beautiful, little one. – said the woman, touched. – So, does it tastes like when you had it with him?

Eleven thought about it for a second and looked at her cone, and then she tasted the remains of ice cream in her tongue and her cheeks before answering. – Well, actually no. I mean it's still very yummy but, somehow it's different from when I had it with my boyfriend, you know?

The woman nodded and looked at her with a grin. – Could it be that my ice cream doesn't have the special touch Mike gave to it?

Eleven blushed deep red like Mike did when Hopper caught them making out in his car, nonetheless she smiled and lowered her gaze before looking back into her blue eyes. Because that was it, because the mint ice cream needed something else. Because the first time she

had it was when Mike took her there when they were fourteen and she laughed at how he made the spoon fly like an airplane before letting her taste it. Because after they finished each ice cream, they spent some very hot ten minutes in the parking lot, making out not caring about the people around and tasting the remains of their favourite flavours on each other's mouths. Mint ice cream was delicious, it was fresh, it was sweet, it was creamy, and it was the best flavour ever created but it was even better when it was on Mike's full lips.

The door bell rang when two girls walked in, laughing side by side and Eleven checked on her pink watch – Mike's gift – and realized it was time to get home and control her father's beers.

- I think I should be going, Mrs Deveraux. – said El standing up and moving towards the curve around the register to reach the woman and, this time, she held her arm tenderly. – I won't forget what you did for me today. I feel better, I feel closer to Mike as well and I think he'll notice and it'll help him feel better too when we talk tomorrow.

The woman smiled, nodding at the girl's words. – Tell him I say hi and that, when comes back, the ice cream of the first Friday will be on the house.

Eleven smiled wide and couldn't help herself; she hugged the lady in front of her. – Thank you. – she whispered and then waved another goodbye before heading back to the parking lot where she left Mike's car.

While she drove back to the cabin, with the cool breeze of November against her cheeks, Eleven still tasted the mint in her mouth and a smiled cut across her face, thinking about the first date she'd have when Mike's comes back on the Christmas break. She thought she could tell him about how she kept their tradition and she would ask him to do the same, if he could due to his tight schedule, so they could compare their favourite's flavours when they ate them alone and then on each other's mouths. She felt good because she had been listened, advised and she felt now free of the sadness she had been shutting herself into. But now she was happier, now she knew she could help Mike feeling better too, she could help him relax when they'd talk; she also felt like it was okay to talk with Hopper or Joyce

when she finds herself missing him a lot more. She also figured she could ask Max to have some ice cream together sometimes and talk about their boyfriends and all the boys, reminiscing the moments they shared and how much they missed them and how happy they'd feel when the party reunites in December.

And above all, she couldn't wait to have ice cream with her boyfriend again under the presence of Mrs. Deveraux and, this time, check with desire and assure the world with full confidence that there was no better mint than the mint of Mike.

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Ta Dah! Well, first of all I KNOW Mike doesn't quite appear on this one but do not worry; Mike will be in the next chapter, charming as always. I wanted to show Eleven's feeling towards Mike by making her talk about him with someone that doesn't know anything about their story. I think it was cute.

Second, I want to say that, even when this chapter was long, next ones will be considerable shorter. For longer one-shots I'll keep publishing individual ones like I've been doing so far.

I really hope you guys enjoyed it and follow me on this new adventure. I have so much Mileven in mind that I can't hold myself. I'll upload frequently but, keep in mind that reviews are important. If I get feedback, I'll keep publishing.

Also, I'll give a spoiler from the next chapter to the first person who can tell me which book I made a reference to and which one of my stories had a wink on the same paragraph of the first reference. You can put in on your review but, keep in mind that I can pm you if you have an account.

Until next time!

2. I Think I Love You

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

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Rated: T. / Romance - Friendship. / (Eleven y Mike), Dustin, Will, Lucas, Max, Hopper.

xx

I THINK I LOVE YOU

July 6th, 1985.

While driving, Hopper asked himself how he had become this soft. Literally an hour ago he had made clear that she was not allowed to go and there he was, taking his new daughter on his van, downtown where everyone could see her, all because of Joyce.

On the last few weeks, Eleven had asked, begged, claimed and plead to Hopper to allow her going to the movies with her friends. Obviously the Chief refused, saying it wasn't safe and that in fact, they were already jeopardising her safety at letting her start school on September with the rest of the kids instead of waiting until December when the year of hiding would actually be completed. But starting school two months later wouldn't make things any easier for her, that's why they had been tutoring her all three of them, Steve, the Wheeler boy and himself; yet school was one thing and letting her go out was another, an unnecessary risk so he said no despite of her puppy eyes.

And no meant *no*... for about ten minutes, because as soon as he made his decision clear, Eleven called Mike to tell him the bad news and, a couple of minutes later, Joyce Byers called Hopper to the cabin and *informed* that he was going to take the girl to the movies or God help her, she would slap some sense on him and then drive Eleven herself to her friends.

Both Mike and El were very thankful to Joyce and the unexplainable

control she had over the Chief of Police.

- Now listen to me, kid. These I'll call the 'Don't be stupid rules: Play dates edition'. You stay with your friends at all times, you keep a low profile and when you guys leave the cinema you go straight to your friend Mike's house, okay? And you will not, really NOT use your powers in public, is that understood? Keep in mind that I agreed on this only because his parents aren't home this weekend. – he said while getting closer to the movie theatre.

It wasn't like Hopper loved the idea of letting her go to that boy's house with no parents around but, given that they might recognize her, it was wiser to wait until they met.

- Hopper, Mike is not my friend, he is my *boyfriend*. – El corrected, not understanding why it was so hard for him to simply accept it.

- Whatever.

Soon they spotted the cinema from a block away and saw the party waiting at the entrance greeting Will who just arrived on his mother's car and also, he saw the tall – taller than the last week – figure of Mike. The word 'boyfriend' still haunted Hopper in the air and he was tempted to turn around the corner, drive back to the cabin and not let her go out until she was fifty years old.

When they parked, Mike was the first to stand next to her door wearing a big smile. He was so excited because not only it was the first time she was allowed to leave the cabin for real and taste a bit of true freedom; but also it was the very first time she would actually watch a movie at a cinema.

The teenage girl jumped on her seat, more excited than she was when she spotted Mike between the rest of the boys and felt her heart pounding on her chest which made Hopper sighed. He still believed that those kids were a little – a lot – too young to be dating already, although he pretty much figured those two would end up dating eventually. The one year he had Eleven hidden in secret, he realized she had feelings for Mike and, when he witnessed the moment when they reunited it was very, very clear that those feelings were reciprocated and that having them dating was imminent. Eleven

opened her door as soon as her boyfriend reached the van, she would have thrown herself on his arms if Hopper wouldn't have held her back, grabbing the door and facing her.

- Just tell me what I want to hear, kid.

Eleven huffed. – No walking around, no show off, no powers.

- And no kissing. – added Hopper.

She frowned. – And no breathing! – she said, sardonically. – Seriously, dad?

He wasn't sure if it was the sarcasm or the fact that she had call him dad again, – three times if you count this one –, but it made him chuckle and ruffle her hair, smiling and letting her go.

- Jeez, kid. Come on, get out.

Eleven leaned and kissed his cheek before getting out. She didn't even stand with both feet on the side walk when her arms were already around Mike's neck and her lips lingered with his, like she did every time she saw him. Even though Mike blushed because he actually heard Eleven and Hopper's talk a moment ago, he was just standing next to the vehicle after all, but he quickly forgot about it because her lips were soft, warm and perfect, and way more interesting so he kissed her back until the Chief honked at them, causing both teenagers to jump.

Eleven, slowly and refusing to let Mike go completely, turned around and glared at her father as if asking him how did he dare to interrupt them.

- Hey! What did I *just* said? – asked Hopper, pissed.

- Don't worry Chief, I'll be your eyes at all times and keep them away from each other. – said Dustin, moving between Mike and Eleven causing them to look at him with narrowed eyes. He just waved at Hopper, military style and the Chief rolled his eyes and sighed, driving back to his house without another word.

When he was out of sight, Dustin tapped his friends on the back and

made his classic grin, then looked at El.

- There, he is gone. Keep eating your boyfriend's face.

The entire party laughed, especially Eleven who hugged her curly friend. Dustin was her favourite, – after Mike, of course – and then she kissed her boyfriend again eagerly before giving the rest of her friends her classic 'hello hugs'.

And then back to Mike's mouth.

- Oh shit, can't you guys just stop for once? – said Lucas.

- Seriously, get a room already. – added Max.

El only left Mike's lips a moment to reply. – But we do have rooms. Me at Hopper's and Mike at his house too. – she said completely unaware about the double meaning on her read haired friend, and then she claimed his lips back, forgetting about everyone else.

Will just smiled and Dustin tapped their backs again hard and playfully while his friends kept on sucking face.

- Okay, people. It's \$4,50 each, I'll get the tickets. – he clapped his hands and then whispered to Mike, even when he was busy doing something else. – I'm gonna take your wallet, okay buddy? – he asked while opening his backpack and taking nine dollars – both him and El's ticket – and left, leaving his friends and their make out session alone.

Of course no one seemed surprised, they had already gotten used to witness how gross those two could get, in fact it was rather shocking if they stopped to think about it given that Mike was the one to make the first move when they kissed at the beginning of their relationship, yet that changed abruptly in January when the party saw, dumbfounded, how Eleven simply throw herself to Mike to kiss him senseless. And of course he couldn't be happier about it, because it had been that one date when they fell asleep on the hammock in he cabin when El confessed hearing that time when Mike played a Bee Gee's song for her when they were apart; that she lean to kiss him for the first time and for the first time, it was more than a peck, it had

been a full, breathtaking kiss and it helped Mike relax a lot. Sure, he wasn't against the idea of leaning to kiss her but every time he wanted to do so, he always got really scared he might cross a line or make her feel uncomfortable, that he always needed very clear, obvious signs to gather the courage to do it even after they became boyfriend and girlfriend; so after Eleven became the one who reach his lips first to suck the air from his lungs, was simply the best for Michael Wheeler and he only had to relax and enjoy and kiss her back the way she liked it.

And Eleven really enjoyed making out, oh yeah. Whenever it was when Mike arrived to the cabin or during his visits, or when he had to go, or whatever reason from a peck on the cheek to a full proper kiss, since she gathered the courage to start kissing him, El felt completely free.

After so many soap operas, El found out one day the meaning of that thing Mike did with his mouth on the cafeteria back then, and why he did it, what it meant and also, she found herself longing for Mike to do it again. Even if she couldn't exactly tell *when* she started feeling for him something that was no longer just friendship, she kind of realized it was somewhere in between the first time on the void and the day she knew what a kiss meant; that that was called 'kiss' and that it was something special someone gives to another person whom one likes better than anybody else and to Eleven, nobody was as special as Mike, nor she liked anyone better than him. She spent all those days day-dreaming about how it'd feel to re-live that moment, she felt excited and thirsty every time a kissing scene showed up on her screen, so she'd close her eyes and imagined how would it be to have his lips on hers and move against him and put the world on a stop while the kissed.

At the Snow Ball, when Mike looked at her that way almost like he had been hypnotized, her heart stopped all at once because she realized that that was it, that was the moment she had been dreaming about. The moment that Hopper had taken away from them outside Will's house, the moment when she would finally had her kiss and yet, she couldn't help but being surprised because, in fact, it had been even better than she could have possibly imagine. That night wasn't just a kiss like the one at the cafeteria, that night at the dance

was the first kiss they gave each other since she *did* kissed him back and continue to do so until Hopper picked her up. But she always had to wait until Mike kissed her and she wondered why he seemed to hesitate before doing it, why – even when they were officially dating – he seemed nervous to lean and touch their lips. El never understood that because she thought she was obvious enough and, truth be told, she had no patience at all, so now that Mike gave her green light she could ease her urges and wrap her arms around his neck and kiss him all she wanted, for as long as she likes and he never complained. Especially since El made sure to keep his mouth busy enough.

- Hey, lovebirds! We have to get in, come on, hurry! We have to buy pop corn still! – yelled Lucas from the door and both teenagers pulled apart and nodded.

Mike smiled and leaned a bit to peck her lips before taking her hand with his and walking inside.

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Almost two hours later, a group of six astonished teenagers came out of the movie theatre.

- Holy shit! I am never *ever* getting over this! – said Dustin, holding his cap on his head walking with his friend on his back.

- Best. Movie. Ever! – said Lucas, pacing along his friend. – I mean, it had it all! It is just as good as...

- Star Wars? Yeah! – Dustin agreed and high fived with him.

Lucas turned to his girlfriend, holding her from her shoulders and pulling Max next to him. She elbowed him playfully. – What do you think?

Max rolled her eyes. – Call me crazy, stalker, but I think you are going to drag me to watch it again.

Lucas laughed and pretended to be thinking carefully, caressing his chin. – Well... Maybe.

- What do you think, buddy? – asked Dustin turning to Will, a few

steps behind him while they walked to the alley next to the cinema where they left their bikes parked, right outside its emergency exit. – Which part was your favourite?

- Huh, I don't know. All of it! – Will replied, as it was obvious. – But I think the funniest line was when Doc. Brown thought there was a problem with gravity in the future because Marty kept saying 'oh this is heavy'.

They laughed; especially Dustin and Lucas who repeated the line like last Halloween, when they kept on saying things were 'tubular', even when they didn't know what it meant.

Mike behind them was walking with Eleven, hands linked and he squeezed her ever so tenderly to caught her attention and he leaned, making her feel goosebumps on her cheek and all the way through her heart. – What do you think, El? Which one was your favourite? – he asked with a smile.

Eleven thought about it for a moment, imitating Lucas and caressing her chin like she was thinking what to say.

- Well, Lorraine and George's kiss at the end, yes. I thought he wasn't going to make it because that guy pushed him but then he took her back and... Oh the way he held her face right before kissing. – she whispered like a totally normal teenage girl, closing her eyes to all that romance. – Mike, could you hold me like that?

Mike almost became jealous of George McFly when he heard his girlfriend day-dreaming, but then he quickly saw that she was bewildered with the scene and not the actor. He moved his hands up to her neck and her jaw, caressing her cheeks with his thumbs. Eleven's eyes grew wider before closing and she smiled when he leaned, waiting for his touch. – Like this?

El nodded and he kissed her lips tenderly, making her fly and not caring about anything else. No matter how many times she kissed Mike, she could never get tired of it; they didn't care about anything else when they tasted each other lips. Not even about their friends complaining again.

- Fuck, dude! Is it absolutely necessary? – Lucas whined.

- Yeah, get a room right now or else I'll skate at 88 mph, even if it takes me back in time. – Max said, half true half kidding and they all laughed, even them when they pulled apart.

- Hey! – called Dustin, holding his bike. – Wanna have a race to Mike's? El and Will were dropped by their parents, I can go with Will, Max goes with Lucas and El goes with Mike. What do you say?

- Yeah, I'm in!

Max placed her skateboard between her and Lucas and she held him by his shoulders. Will sat behind Dustin, holding his seat and Eleven wrapped her arms around Mike's waist, kissing his nape.

- Good luck. – she whispered.

Mike turned around, looking at her from his shoulder and narrowed his eyes with a smile on his lips. – Did you... just quoted Princess Leia?

Her only response was a soft giggle.

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The race to the Wheeler's ended up on a tie between Lucas and Dustin which led to a bunch of cursing and pranks. Mike and El on the other hand, arrived a couple of seconds later causing the rest of the party to joke around about Mike's skills on his bike, especially since they thought Eleven would use her powers to win.

- I think El has been sucking the life out of Mike with her mouth. – joked Dustin and she immediately turned to her boyfriend, looking at him absolutely worried she might have been hurting him.

He shook his head. – Don't pay attention to him, El. He's an idiot.

Truth was that Mike was actually the fastest of them all, maybe because he was currently the tallest one, but he enjoyed having Eleven's arms around his waist far more than winning a race. Her breathing against the hairs on his nape, her laughter next to his ear,

the wind around them melting with her perfume, the way her hands squeezed him when he rode down the street were all reasons enough for him to drive his bike slowly so he could keep enjoying her embrace and the way she experienced a slice of freedom.

When the party stepped inside his house, they wandered around a bit through the living room and the kitchen, given that Mike's parents were out on the holidays and Nancy also left on a date. Dustin, the best one at cooking, made his way to the kitchen and begun taking ingredients from the cabinets to make a bunch of homemade waffles, so they could eat when they'd go to the basement.

Eleven, on the other hand, felt her heart frozen up when they set a foot again on her boyfriend's house. She remembered that day when a boy and two of his friends took her, no questions asked to that house; she was covered on his jacket protecting her from the cold and the rain, getting wet himself. A boy who skipped school on the next day to show her what was life like when you have a house, a family and a couch.

Mike saw how she walked slowly through his living room, touching the furnitures, the photographs and the walls with the tip of her fingers, reminiscing that week and the way her eyes begun welling up.

- Can we go to the basement? – she asked in such way that melted his heart and those big shinny eyes bewitched him.

Mike nodded, of course. In fact, if she had ask him to stand next to the end of the world and then jump, he would have done that too. She smiled, they both did because he knew what she really wanted to see: the fort, *her* fort.

- Yeah, we always end up there anyway! – said Will, walking beside her unbeknownst of the moment his friends were sharing.

- Hey, assholes! Turn the TV or something; I get bored of listening to you chitchatting all the time! – yelled Dustin from the kitchen and Mike took the remote and turned the TV on at a random channel.

A couple of minutes had gone by when Will decided he was too

excited with the movie they just saw and he wanted to keep talking about it.

- You know what I loved the most? The music!

They all looked at each other and snorted. – No shit, Byers. I think I'm in shock. – said Max.

- I liked it too, Will. That slow song when they danced was beautiful.
– said Eleven, while cuddling next to Mike on his father's La-Z-Boy.

- I loved when Marty played Johnny B. Goode's song; besides it was very clever to make Chuck Berry's cousin call him to listen that new sound, right? – they all agreed. – Although 'The Power of Love' is a hell of a song too and, if you think about it, Marty uses that opportunity to make his parent's lives better by changing their adolescence.

Mike, Eleven and Max agreed but Lucas shook his head.

- Nu-uh, dude. He *has* to help his parents because he messed up their first encounter and he was going to die. – said Lucas.

- Disappear from existence! - yelled Dustin while pouring some batter to the waffle iron.

- Okay, disappear. – corrected Lucas.

- Yeah but it turns out for the best. – pointed Max. – Because they were losers and then Marty fix them up by changing their personalities a little, right?

Max conclusion seemed to satisfy the rest of the party and also made an opening line for something interesting for them to discuss. Lucas was the first one to talk while sitting on the couch next to her and looking far away, meanwhile on the TV was a playing a rerun of a popular sitcom.

- Man, can you imagine? – asked to his friends, his eyes sparkling from excitement. – How would it be to actually travel in time?

They remained silent for a moment, thinking about Lucas's question.

- I think the best part of the time machine Doc. Brown made was the actual DeLorean he used. – said Max. – That's one hell of a car.

- That we agree. – simply said Mike. He was quiet because he was very comfortable laying on his father's chair with Eleven practically on top of him, holding him tight like they did when they were on the hammock at the cabin, while he curled his fingers through her hair.

Sharing those moments and cuddling with their friends around got easier and easier as the time went by. At the beginning Mike had been really nervous when Eleven nonchalantly laid on top of him, or sat on his lap when they were all together, but she seemed so comfortable doing it that he soon found himself needing her to do those things, whether they were alone or not. Besides, if she enjoyed sitting on his lap or cuddling with him with other people around, who was he to stop her?

- I got it! – said Dustin excited, walking into the living room with a spatula in hand, looking at his friends. – What would you guys change if you have a DeLorean?

- I would... drive it? – suggested Lucas.

- Not the car, you moron. The time machine! Jeez!

Dustin's question seemed to fall on his friends like a cloth of fantasy in their heads, taking them to different scenarios. The idea of moving in time as free as they rode their bikes was extremely tempting even if it was to change something from the past or see the future.

It was Lucas the one who broke the silence and told them about the week before when Erica pulled a particular nasty prank on him changing the sugar and the salt before he had his chocolate milk. He knew it was a poor use for a time machine but still.

- Wow, stalker! If you need a time machine just to pull a prank on your little sister, I'm getting really disappointed on you. – said Max jokingly and they all laughed.

Lucas huffed. – Oh yeah? Then tell me, Madmax, what would you do?

Max thought about last November when she injected her step-brother with the sedative. She wasn't regretting it at all, she just wished she could go back in time and do it again so she could see the look on his face as she smacked Steve's bat between his legs.

- This time I would take a picture of him when he looked down at how close I was from smashing his balls. – she said between giggles, feeling proud of her.

Dustin, who gave the idea, wanted to go back to the Snow Ball and think about something clever to say when he asked Stacy to dance with him. Lucas snorted.

- Really? What about all that crap you put on your hair? Maybe you should start with that. – Lucas said and Dustin threw the spatula at him. Before they got into a fight, Mike cut them off and turned to Will.

Will, unlike his friends, thought about not travelling to the past, but the future.

- I guess it'd be normal to say that I would prefer not to find the demogorgon on my way home. – he said. To the entire party, Will had become more like his own character from their games than he himself knew about. – But I would go and see the future and see how my mom and Jonathan are and also, see how we are and if we are all still together.

Will, the wise. Definitely.

- What about you, buddy? – asked Dustin to Mike.

Mike didn't need to think too much. He knew that, if he had a time machine he would have pushed Eleven aside from the demogorgon when she saved their lives so she would've never had to be lost in the woods scared and cold. He would have made anything to avoid them the pain that was being away for so long.

- If I had a DeLorean. – he began, looking at his girlfriend and caressing her cheek with his fingers. – I would do anything I could to have this from day one.

Two seconds later, he found himself wanting to get back in time and just whisper that on her ear, because his friends started joking, making kisses noises, embarrassing him. But El looked at him with such adoration he quickly forgot about their mocking.

- Okay, okay! – said Dustin again. – What about you, El? If you had a time machine, what would you chang... Ouch!? – he complained when Lucas smacked him with the spatula he had previously thrown at him.

- Duh! Isn't that obvious? The lab would be the first thing she would change about her life.

- You don't know that, asshole. Maybe she would, I don't know, turn away from the demogorgon before it pulled her back to the Upside Down. – replied Dustin.

- No. – interrupted Max. – She obviously would change the days when she was away from Wheeler.

- How about if we hear what El has to say? – cut Will, trying to stop his friends mumbling and looking at the girl directly. – What would you change, El?

They all stopped talking and looked at Eleven who blushed deep, shaking her head slowly and avoiding eye contact, looking at her hand and playing with Mike's polo shirt.

- Nothing.

That they didn't expect. They were surprised because, given that she was the one who had the most reasons to use a time travel machine and change her life entirely, she had said that she wouldn't change any of it.

- Nothing? – asked Will in disbelief. She only looked at her hands, incapable of facing her friends.

- I... wouldn't change anything. – she whispered so low it was hard to hear her.

Eleven knew that the normal thing to say would have been to get

back to the day that she was born and stop the bad men to take away from her the life she was supposed to have. She knew it would've been practical to say that she would have stop 'Papa' to screw her mother's brain. It would've been predictable to say that she wanted to go back in time and never believe a word of what Brenner told her about the world or herself, even it would've been a great idea to throw him on the Upside Down when she accidentally opened the gate. It would've been obvious to say that she would try to find a way to say something to Mike when he kept on calling, without the bad men hearing too. All those things would've been great in which time travels could do but she had a better reason yet, to not use any of them.

- Why? – Lucas couldn't help but to ask.

She continued staring at her hands while making that soft, shy smile and she shrugged then she sat up on the La-Z-Boy she was sharing with Mike and stayed still until he sat up too and placed a hand on her shoulder, encouraging her. It was then when Eleven look back at her friends, looking at each of them slowly and carefully. Her friends, those who helped her, who spent the afternoon with her, who shared their pranks and movies and music and, finally she looked back at Mike, fixing her eyes on his. He was waiting for her to speak because she knew he knew her like the back of his hand.

Eleven smiled. Her eyes were gigantic moons shining on Mike and the lips she couldn't stop kissing and then back to those dark beautiful eyes that took her breath away every time he looked at her like that.

- Because everything I've been through made possible for me to find you.

Just then Mike forgot what his name was.

A frenzy of thoughts made unclear noises and feelings, twirling around his mind and messing his head like a twister, plus Eleven's voice echoing in his ears with all his friends watching them; Mike felt his mouth hanging open in shock because of what she had just said and, suddenly, he saw things crystal clear. Even if he knew his feelings towards Eleven were so deep they reach his bones, so strong

they stopped the world entire and so pure they pulled them both onto one true centre where everyone else disappeared, creating a parallel universe that was only theirs; Mike saw then, at that moment, the one and only sentence so palpable like the chair underneath him, so real like the movie they saw that afternoon. It was something that was... real. He could touch it, he couldn't deny it.

Because he knew it, he had always known but maybe, he couldn't even say it to himself. How could he? Everywhere where he heard adults talking, whether it was TV, or his teachers or his mother when she fought with Nancy when she came home after hours from her dates; made Mike think that he was too young to feel that way, but he knew. He *just* knew.

His feelings weren't deep to the bone, no. The love he felt for El was his bones, it was the muscles in his body, the veins and the blood running through them. The love he felt for her was the air on his lungs, the dreams he had when he fell asleep and the sun shining in the morning when he went to school. He had been aware of it since he refused to believe she was dead, since he called her on his supercom for the first time and every night, not giving up. He knew it because, now that she told him she had been hearing all those days, he was sure he didn't imagine hearing her voice disguised on the statics when he called. Because they were bonded, because they found each other even when they weren't supposed to; Will should have never disappeared, Eleven should have never escaped – actually she wasn't supposed to get taken away from her mother – and he wasn't supposed to be outside under the rain that night, but they did, and they went through all of it so they could now spend an afternoon on his living room talking about the movie they've seen that day.

There was one sentence that fits the moment, a sentence so pure like the way she kept on looking at him, like the soft smile he adored. It wasn't enough to whisper in her ear that 'he likes her a lot' anymore. Saying that he 'likes' her was like describing Da Vinci's work as a 'nice drawing'; saying that what he felt for her was just a 'crush', was like saying the Millennium Falcon was only a random star ship. And Mike, even when he knew the night that she came back that his feelings were strong as never before, just then sitting in his living room and looking at her in the eyes, he became completely sure that

what he felt for her was true love.

- El, I... - his mouth was dry and his cheeks went flushed when he realized that his friends were still there, stunned and for the first time in a while Mike felt completely shy yet he couldn't stop himself from doing something. He had to say something of else he would die.

I think I love you

David Cassidy's voice on TV broke the silence between the party, forcing them to turn around. Mike saw Eleven and he felt like he was going to burst into flames and she watched the television and then him again, smiling in such way that was warmer than the sun and sweeter than every candy in store.

Damn!

But the boys knew very well about Mike's feelings, they knew even before himself that those feelings existed and those words were floating above both Mike and El even when they hadn't say it, yet. The boys also knew their friend very, very well and they noticed he was panicking so it was Dustin the one who saved his life by walking towards Eleven, taking her hand and starting dancing with her, singing out loud.

- *This morning I woke up with this feeling I didn't know how to deal with and so I just decided to myself, I'd hide it to myself...* – Dustin started singing, shaking Eleven from side to side and dancing fast, giving the rest of the party a meaningful look.

- *And never talk about it and did not go and shout it when you walked into the room!* – yelled Will jumping on the couch and taking the remote turning the TV volume up all he could.

- *I THINK I LOVE YOU!* – Lucas started singing as well, taking Max's hand and mimicking the dancing Dustin was doing. Max played along as well.

- *I think I love you so what am I so afraid of, I'm afraid that I'm not sure of a love there is no cure for!*

The sudden, loud singing and dancing from her friends made Eleven

laughed, feeling a rush of adrenaline and happiness running from her belly to her limbs, pushing aside the odd moment from a few seconds ago. She didn't know what happened that left Mike with his mouth hanging open. She thought she said something wrong but, apparently was only her imagination since, after all, if she had done something wrong, her friends wouldn't start dancing and singing like crazy, right? Besides it reminded her that night at the Snow Ball when they all danced together.

Mike still remained sitting on the La-Z-Boy, looking at his friends and his girlfriend laughing. Will was jumping on the couch and he found himself smiling at his friends and the way they all saved the moment. Because he had been so close to say the words in front of them and he shouldn't, because he should find a way to say those words in a way she would never forget.

Suddenly, like it had just appeared from nowhere, Mike noticed behind his friends, the long forgotten piano in his living room, the piano in which he used to practice when he was little when he received lessons until he turned ten and an idea popped in his head. Because Eleven had begun to enjoy music, because he still had his notes from his piano lessons somewhere in his room, because he remembered his teacher telling him that he actually had a rather good voice and the skills to write his own song. Because suddenly, while Eleven said that meeting him was worthy of all those things she had to suffer, because while she said that he, Michael Wheeler was her destination, Mike realized he needed to lean and whisper those words in her ear as much as he needed to breathe.

But he had to wait.

Because if El made him feel that important, because if she liked music and singing between giggles, because if she was amazed by the skills of all those musicians when they made music with their hands, then he should do his best to surprise her. Mike set a goal, he knew it would take some time and a lot of practice but he had time, because Eleven told him she decided to call the day they found her on November 7th, her birthday and it was only July. Yes, he had time enough. There would be no better opportunity and no better surprise than making her a song and play it for her on her first birthday ever when he would finally confess his love.

Because like the song said he knew that love had no cure and, truth be told, he did not want to get cured at all.

Eleven looked at Mike when Dustin turned her around and she laughed, extending her hand to call him asking for help or to go and dance with her, he couldn't tell. He got lost again in the sound of her voice, the pink of her lips, the blush on her cheeks, and the look on her face. She was perfect to him. She was made for him to be in love with.

I think I love you isn't that what life is made of? Though it worries me to say that I never felt this way.

While he stood up she pulled him to her and held him tight, dancing and burying her face on his chest and smiling against it, feeling complete. Mike was everything to Eleven and Eleven was everything to him. Yeah, maybe they were young and stupid and inexperienced but he knew what he felt and he kissed the top of her head, loving every single hair on her head, surrendering to the music, the dancing and the girl hugging him.

I love you, El. – Mike thought, allowing the words to fill him with the inspiration that would help him write his girlfriend a love song.

November couldn't come fast enough.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hello everyone!

*Well, apparently I don't know what 'short one-shots' means, haha. Anyway I hope you guys liked it. The song the kids danced is 'I think I love you', performed by **David Cassidy** on The Partridge Family. And also, the movie they saw was '**Back to the Future**'. I own nothing.*

*Please guys let me know what you think, feel free to pm me if you have any request or any doubts. I'll continue updating as long as I have feedback, so **please leave a comment**.*

*Oh and I want to wish a very very happy birthday to the wonderful **Cali-chan**, who writes some of the most beautiful Mileven stories I have ever read. This chapter is my present to you.*

Thank you for all the follows and favorites and reviews from the first chapter. Next one will be published between next weekend or the first days of the next one. – I'm doing some makeovers at my house, please be patience. –

Attention: I'll give a spoiler from the next chapter to the first one who knows which one of my published one-shots is this story making reference to.

Until next time!

3. Lap Dance

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I make no profits on writing this.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Rated: M. / Romance – Humour. / Eleven & Mike.

xx

LAP DANCE

November 22nd, 1996.

The salesgirl gave Eleven back her credit card and while she saved the receipt in her purse, she couldn't help but groan for spending a hundred and fifty dollars on something she would use for about five seconds.

- "Here, Mrs. Wheeler, don't forget your bag." – said the girl, giving her the not-so-subtle bag. It was metallic red with a mouth stamp on it and the word 'sexy' coming out of it, and also unnecessary big for the – barely – piece of clothing inside.

She couldn't help but blush while walking back to the car and placing the bag on the back seat. El was the only one of them who drove the Corsa to work every day, Mike's job was only three blocks away from their home and he had insisted she should be the one driving it since he would be a lot more comfortable if she didn't take the bus.

That year they finally got to buy a full equipped Chevrolet Corsa thanks to the money they got from Eleven's car plus Mike's old savings. The Renault 19 Mike had driven during his years in college, the car his grandparents had given him brand new just before he left Hawkins to study; had been sold too and the money was in their shared bank account, in which they saved until they find a house. Eleven still wasn't used to drive their car though, it was bigger than the car Hopper bought for her for Christmas in 1989, and it was also bigger than Mike's first car, the one he had bought when they were in

high school and that, when he moved to Massachusetts, he left for her to keep practicing. She still remembered vividly when Mike told her he wanted her to keep the money from his old Capri's sale after she got her own, she refused of course but she never thought that, in the end, she would end up wearing that money on her left hand.

- "Dummy." – she whispered with a big smile, looking at her left hand on the wheel. The diamonds in her engagement ring were sparkling with the sun light while she drove down the street. She still was amazed that, less than four months after Mike moved to college and when he received the money from his Capri, he went straight to buy the ring with which four years later, he would ask her to marry him.

Yes, dummy. Her lovesick, dummy husband.

Since they got married, the life Eleven already thought was perfect had surpassed all her expectations. Every morning when she'd wake up next to Mike, she lost herself looking at him, absorbing his face and the way he looked while sleeping and the little smile he made when she touched his freckles with the tip of her fingers until he started waking up. She felt mesmerized with Mike, with the man he had become from the little boy that one rainy night rescued her, no questions asked and placed his jacket onto her to keep her from getting even more wet and cold, providing the help she had been pleading her entire life for. He was the one who loved her more than anything in the world, the man she loved and the one with whom she was currently planning the next step in their relationship. The biggest one.

Because since May, Mike and Eleven had been trying to get pregnant.

When Mike graduated he was offered a great job on the MIT's genetic engineer department, working along with his old roommate and good friend at the same time they prepared their master's degree and, even when both Mike and El knew that he would still be very busy; the idea of waiting the approximately three years the specialisation course took with her still in Hawkins and him on Massachusetts, had driven them completely insane. So, after a lot of effort from both of them, El getting a job as a secretary for a gynaecologist, a paediatrician and an obstetrician at a medical centre while Mike also worked harder than ever, and treasuring those little moments they

could shared between their tight schedules; when Mike finally reached all his academic goals they decided to go out and celebrate the beginning of their much more rested lives as husband and wife.

After a nice romantic dinner and one too many drinks for one night, they made their way back to the apartment between intense kisses. El had struggled with the lock, trying in her drunk mind to open the door with the car keys while Mike was holding her from behind and eating her neck, she got impatience and used her powers to open the damn door and they rushed to the bedroom leaving a trail of clothes behind them, ready to the best part of the celebration; because Eleven told him she would reward him for all his hard work by fucking his engineer's brains out.

When they slumped onto the bed they were already in their underwear. There were hands, tongues and groping everywhere, the heat burning their guts was a proof of the lack of sex from the last two weeks when Mike had been so nervous so close to the end that she had to hold him up every time he got on the verge of crying; but now it was all over, now he was kissing her and touching her the way she liked it and she used every inch of her will-power to pull away from his delicious lips and reach his night stand.

- "Honey, wait a seco-*ohhh*-oond, let me get the condom..." - she said with much effort, pulling away from Mike just a bit, sliding from underneath him and start looking for a condom on his night stand.

He took the opportunity to bite one of her butt cheeks when she turned around and not really paying attention on what El said, until a golden package caught his sight. - "Mmmhh no..." - he pleaded, lifting one of Eleven's legs and leaving a trail of kisses across her skin.

She couldn't help but giggle and lean to kiss him. - "I know, Mike, I know. After getting used to the pills I'm not a big fan of the condom either, but the doctor said it's only for precaution." - the week before, El had gotten a cold and the doctor said that while she was taking her medicines, the birth control pills loose a lot of their primary effects, so they should be careful for a few days.

Mike smiled nervously and placed his hands on her shoulders, getting her full attention and looking down into her big eyes, smiling and

caressing her cheeks tenderly. She knew he was trying to say something.

- "Actually El, I was thinking that, maybe, we don't need condoms or pills... anymore." – he suggested. He had a great job and now that he had his master's degree, he was going to be ahead of his own research team and also have more time to be home with her. – "I was thinking that, maybe, we are ready."

Eleven's eyes opened wide and her face turned into one of absolute shock mixed with even greater happiness. Mike's words started echoing in the back of her head and his face became blurry when she started welling up. They had talked about it a few years back, of course, but she thought he wasn't going to suggest something like that so quickly. But there he was, the young man she was so in love with, telling her he wanted to honour his promise and start a family by her side.

- "Y-you... Do you... Want to have a b-baby?" – her voice broke in the middle of the lump inside her throat.

Mike nodded, smiling shyly but truthfully and Eleven felt that she was falling in love with him all over again, a million times stronger and deeper than two seconds ago.

She finally broke down into waves of tears and they hugged, shivering with the excitement from becoming parents. It had taken a half an hour before she could finally stop crying and, even when that night they didn't make love because just by thinking it could bring a baby she started to cry hysterically; at least the condoms and the pills ended up in the garbage.

Every night after that one and a couple of mornings too during the weekends, they spent hours loving each other physically, filled with desire and exhausting pleasure running through their bodies plus the expectation that each encounter could bring a new life. A life born out of the love they shared since they met, a life they'd make themselves and that would change everything in the best possible way. A life they would nourish and protect and love even before it'd be born and until the day they die.

But then, since that night six months back, such life hadn't happened yet.

Her first period Eleven found in her underwear on a Wednesday morning had been expected and taken easily. The gynaecologist for whom she worked for, told both of them that given that she had taken pills for years, it was only natural for the body to adjust during the first two months, so on the next period none of them worried when Mike had to go and buy another box of tampons.

The third period was a whole different story, she took it as a defeat and it started to worry them but since the fourth period she had started to cry her eyes out in Mike's arms. He always tried to soothe his wife telling her that it was okay, that the baby would come, trying to give her hope despite of him himself feeling worried too. He knew she was terrified that Brenner had done something to her to make her infertile and, on the sixth month when another dreadful period appeared and El started blaming herself and crying harder than she ever did before, Mike decided that that was his breaking point. He wasn't going to stand there, hearing how she took blame for something that wasn't her fault. He knew deep inside that none of them had any problems with conceiving and, after talking with El's doctor to get an appointment and after a series of medical exams and some very uncomfortable questions about their sex lives, the gynaecologist told them that they were perfectly healthy and the problem was actually very, very dumb. Stress.

Apparently, and since the universe sometimes liked to pull pranks on people, the fact that every time they made love they hoped a baby would come; had, somehow worked against them. The doctor said that it was very common, that many couples lived through the same problem nowadays and, even when the sex could be good, - El corrected her, saying that it was excellent rather than good, and Mike died from embarrassment -; the fact that they reached the orgasm thinking it would make a baby was shutting their bodies from actually making one. Therefore she suggested they try new things, anything that could work as a surprise, like lingerie, new positions - they rolled their eyes, because they did a lot on a regular basis already -, and sex on different periods of the day, sexy dancing or whatever stuff they could use to bring fire into the bedroom.

- "We have enough fire, thank you." – El snorted, while parking the car on the garage and she took a peek at the bag behind her.

That afternoon when she got off from work, she decided to face the bloody store and went to buy a black lace negligee to inspire Mike when he'd get home from the lab a couple of hours later. El huffed, remembering how the doctor suggested that he was the one who needed inspiration, that woman clearly didn't know how inspired her husband was when the clothes were off.

Since their relationship became physical, Mike's endurance during sex had never disappointed her. Every time her boyfriend and now husband, had taken Eleven to heaven and back, every time he got her to climax. The way he could always make her moan, scream and cum; the resistance he had even when the intimacy repeated twice – and even three times – in the same night, always brought her as much pleasure as it was possible. She never understood when her co-workers talked about not getting an orgasm from their lovers, because every time El and Mike had party time she always made her business to come. It definitely wasn't lack of passion, or desire or energy. Only by thinking that if the negligee could get Mike even more eager than he usually was, then he wouldn't even let her leave the bed in the entire weekend.

Although she wouldn't exactly complain.

When Eleven went to the second floor and opened the door of the apartment, she immediately noticed that the couch was facing the kitchen instead of the TV where she clearly remember it was after cleaning that morning before going to work. When she put her keys on the hook next to the door, she also noticed Mike's keys were already there.

- "Mike?" – she called, leaving her purse and the bag on the couch. – "Are you home?"

It was way too early for him to be back even after finishing his master's degree but just before she could get worried, a note was spotted.

'Sit, relax and enjoy. I love you.'

Eleven couldn't help but to giggle and feel intrigued as soon as she read the note and thought Mike would be in the bedroom but, before asking, she decided to play along and went to sit on the couch, taking her shoes off.

- "Okay, honey, I'm sitting." – she said amusingly and, as soon as she talked she felt music starting, the intro of a song she knew from Nancy's favourite movie but she never expected to hear Mike's footsteps and the parquet floor and watching him sliding in front of her.

And less of all, she never expected that as soon as Bob Seger started to sing, Mike would turn around to her and started singing and dancing with a brush in his hands... wearing only a shirt, socks and underwear.

- *"Just take those old records off the shelf, I'll sit and listen to 'em by myself..."*

Eleven's eyes almost popped out of her face in shock as soon as Mike started to sing like Tom Cruise in Risky Business, imitating his moves and that unexpected funny craziness while he danced with passion for her. She couldn't help but laugh, watching the way he was so comfortable dancing in his underwear.

- *"Today's music ain't got the same soul..."* – he started walking to her, bouncing his head along the rhythm, ruffling his curls the way she liked.

- *"I like that old time rock 'n' roll."* – when he reached his wife, Mike placed each leg beside Eleven's knees and, throwing the brush in the air he put his hands on his head making his curls go crazy while his eyes were glued to the woman he loved and he bounced on his feet, moving his hips seductively by the rhythm and opening his shirt.

- *"Don't try to take me to a disco; you'll never even get me out on the floor."* – he gave a step back again, fixing his eyes on Eleven's and looking at her between half lidded eyes and a seductive grin while he unbuttoned his shirt, making her lose every single thought in her brain. – *"In ten minutes I'll be late for the door. I like that old time rock 'n' roll..."*

Eleven simply couldn't stop laughing in amusement and excitement, moving her left foot along the music and clapping her hands, encouraging him to keep dancing.

- *"Still like that old time rock 'n' roll. That kind of music just soothes the soul."* – Mike walked back to her and he took one of her hands and pressed it against his chest, caressing all the way down his upper body and his stomach until it reach the waist of his underwear, causing her jaw to drop to the floor. – *"I reminisce about the days of old, with that old time rock 'n' roll..."*

When Bob Seger was replaced by a guitar solo, Mike jumped back again with his shirt open, giving him the sexiest look and he fell on the floor playing an invisible guitar like a pro. Then he jumped effortlessly and stood back on his feet, throwing the inexistent object and coming back to her, placing a feet next to her on the couch and holding both his hands in the back of his head, moving his hips back and forth while smiling at her,licking and biting his lower lip with a crooked smile.

Fuck, he was hot!

- *"Won't go to hear 'em play a tango, I'd rather hear some blues or funky old soul."* – the foot he placed next to her went back down and he lean once more, placing his hands on the back of the couch singing right to her face, so dangerously close to her lips. She was being tortured; she wanted to kiss him just so badly she felt like burning. – *"There's only one sure way to get me to go, start playing old-time rock 'n' roll."*

Just before they could touch each other lips, El realized she was thirsty and she wanted to drink from no one else but Mike. But then, again, he pulled back except this time he took her with him, carrying her in his arms in bridal style, causing her to wrap her arms around his neck while he kept on dancing so naturally. He, on the other hand, was still so into his song that he keep on 'playing the guitar' on Eleven's thigh while dancing. Sometimes she forgot just how strong Mike really was.

- *"Call me a relic, call me what you will, say I'm old-fashioned, say I'm over the hill."* – He kept on singing, his face barely and inch away

from her. His full lips were moving sinfully seductive, probably more than ever before and even in the middle of such funny surprise, she looked back into his eyes and saw the animal, wild desire he was holding back.

- *"Today's music ain't got the same soul. I like that old-time rock 'n' roll."* – with an agility that would have freak the guys who used to bully him when he was a kid, Mike climbed on the couch with Eleven in his arms and kept on dancing along with the song. Even when he was still thin with the years he had become, well, *hot*. She always thought he was hot of course but she knew that, in general terms more women turned around to look at him. With the clothes on those abs and arms weren't obvious but, – and such thought made her feel lucky and with goosebumps – when the clothes were off, she felt like the luckiest woman alive because she was the only one who could see and touch Mike's body and know just how strong he was.

El was still in his arms and tired as he must have been, he didn't let her go. Better yet, he was holding her tighter against him while his right hand started caressing her thigh until it reached the skirt from her uniform. She looked at him dumbfolded, a proud smile on his face and the way he was looking at her made her feel butterflies in her stomach, forgetting even her own name. When the song started to repeat the chorus and fading away, Mike jumped on the couch and landed onto it, sitting and with his wife on his lap. They both laughed hard.

It took a couple of minutes for him to catch his breath again. – "Well..." - he started, his smile was amazing and he started kissing her cheek, her neck and finally her lips, sweetly. For a moment, Eleven wanted nothing but to shush him up and make out. – "Do you think this performance has taken the stress from us, El?" – Mike asked and pressed his forehead against hers, holding her tighter.

Eleven couldn't help but giggle at him and realized which had been the purpose of his surprise and she couldn't help herself anymore. She took his face in her hands and started kissing him passionately. At that moment, if it was even possible, El noticed that she loved him a lot more than she did that same morning.

- "You know..." - said El when they needed to catch their breaths. Her

left hand started caressing his chest, sliding down under his shirt, looking at him and enjoying the view of the body that made her reach the stars without leaving the bedroom almost every night. – "I think that, when the doctor suggested sexy dancing and special underwear, she meant me."

Mike let her leg go for a moment to caress his chin as if he was having a deep thought, clearly playing fool. – "Well, I don't remember her being any specific."

She couldn't help but giggle again and then kiss him, thankful for the man she married. – "You are such a dummy, you know that? But I love you."

Mike lean to peck her lips. – "Yes, I am. I'm *your* dummy." – he said and then pointed at a finger on his left hand, showing the wedding ring. – "Forevaaah."

El laughed again harder, holding his face and kissing him all she could, straddling him on the couch. – "Yep, all mine."

Maybe his dancing made possible for a baby to come up, but honestly they didn't care, not when the words became kisses and laugh turned into whimpers and moaning, the air became heavier and hot causing the clothes to come off and Mike and Eleven made love on the couch next to a negligee that he didn't even had to see to get inspired as never before, even when the intimacy repeated twice more, in the bedroom and then the shower. That day all they could think about was the other. There was no baby in their minds, no stress, no worries but laughter, surprise, electricity and passion.

The next morning, when they were having breakfast they looked at each other all of a sudden, almost as if they read each others minds with one specific question that made them both shake from laughter: if they manage to conceive the night before, how would they explain the baby, once he'd be all grown up, that he was conceive because his father made his mother a lap dance?

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hi everyone! Well this chapter took a bit more than I thought. Some of

you already knew about it but it was the first part I had trouble writing, yet I'm very pleased with the result. I'm sorry for making you guys wait. Also, this one was a request, somebody asked me to do something 'silly' a month ago and well... ta dah! Remember guys you can always pm me to ask anything you want or to make requests. And also, I want to thank AliKatt who told me to put quotations marks. I haven't been doing it because it's not required in my natural language, so I honestly didn't know it might confuse you guys. I apologize.

*Also, Mike's song is call 'Old time rock n' roll' from **Bob Seger**.*

Ok, now this week contest: I have many ideas still, yet there are two ideas which I can't decide to publish next so... I told you before I'm doing some major makeovers at my house, so, if you guys guess exactly WHY I am doing these makeovers you will have the chance to make that decision. I'll pm the winner these two ideas and that person will get to choose, therefore, this winner will know what next chapter is about. – If more than one person gets it right, I'll choose the first one, because the answer is very easy. –

*That said, I hope you guys liked this chapter and, as always, I'll keep uploading as long as I have feedback, so please **leave a comment**.*

Until next time!

4. Luke is a Jedi

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Rated: K. / Family - Romance. / (Eleven & Mike); OC.

xx

LUKE IS A JEDI

May 25th, 1998.

Eleven huffed when she realized she didn't buy enough chocolate chips for all the muffins she made that afternoon. She sighed, she had to go to the store, again.

- "Honey, I'm going to the store, I'm out of chips. Do you need anything?" – she asked, walking out of the kitchen to the living room, taking her purse.

Mike, who was sitting on the couch watching Star Wars Ep. IV, turned to his wife when she talked to him.

- "Let's go, baby." – he said, turning off the TV and standing up but she stopped him and turn the TV on again for him, smiling.

- "No, honey it's okay, I'll just go to the store, don't worry. Besides I can't bare the idea of keeping you away from this movie."

Mike rolled his eyes and faked resentment. – "Are you calling *me* a dork?"

Eleven laughed openly and lean to kiss him, holding his face between her hands and wrapping his lips with hers. No matter how many times she'd kissed him over the years, it was never enough. She always wanted more and more from Mike's lips.

- "Yes." – she said nonchalantly between giggles and caressing his freckles with her thumbs. – "If I don't find chips on the store, I'll have

to go the market so don't worry. Watch him, okay?"

The same dopey smile she had was also on Mike's full lips just like all those times when the woman he loves kissed him like that. There were plenty of things he loved about El's kisses but the sound their lips made when they pulled apart was definitely very, very sexy.

- "Of course, baby. Be careful." – he whispered and kissed her hand lovingly.

Eleven smiled back and took her keys before sending him a flying kiss and closing the door. They've been living on the new house for a year and a half already. Mike's grandparents – from Karen's side – had split their properties, investments, money and some high yield bonds between their daughter and their three grandchildren equally on their will. Well, *almost* equally since Mike got, besides his share his grandparents house too, probably because his grand father was so darn proud his only male grandson had graduated on the same college he went when he was younger. But the house was so big it overwhelmed both Mike and El, especially Eleven who always found herself more comfortable on smaller locations; therefore the house was sold and they bought a medium size one with both big front and back yard. It was also only two blocks away from the apartment they used to rent so Mike could walk to work.

That day Eleven had been preparing muffins for the next day presentation for her patisserie class. It was a recent hobby she discovered and Mike suggested she should take classes so she could learn more if she enjoyed it, and she did, and he loved to see El so happy since she discovered she had a natural talent with everything related with cooking and basically, anything she did by hand, even without using her powers. Also, truth be told, he loved the fact that after class those muffins will be available for them to eat, and by *them* he included his research team on the lab. El wanted Mike to make a lot of friends on work, especially since Florian – his old roommate and current friend –, mentioned that the people who worked for Mike didn't like him much at first, so El begun sending his husband to work every week with a basket of treats. Now not only did his research team loved their boss and his wife, but also started calling him 'Wheeler Wonka in Candyland'.

Meanwhile on TV, Luke Skywalker was practicing his skills with the lightsaber on the Millennium Falcon when a soft whimper caught his attention and he lean above the cot next to him and smiled. Removing the little sheet away, Mike lifted him up and held him against his chest enjoying his warmth and his scent.

- "Come here, little guy. Wanna watch a movie with dad?" – asked Mike, holding his son in his arms.

The nine months old baby boy looked at his father with those gigantic eyes given by his mother above a universe of freckles, courtesy from Mike. Eleven usually spends a long time before her boys wake up, watching them sleep and he, on the other hand, loved waking up and find her feeding the baby next to him. Both thought their little boy was the exact resemblance of the other, El saying he was exactly like his dad and Mike insisting he was beautiful, just like his mom.

- "Got something for me, sweetie?" – asked Mike, checking the baby's diaper and when he saw he was still clean and dry he breathed in relief, sitting back on the couch and continued watching the movie with his son in his arms, kissing his still bold little head. – "I think you just wanted to keep me company."

While R2-D2 found the controls that'd allow them enter on the Imperial network, Mike smiled looking at his son who's eyes were glued to the screen and a little smile on his lips. During the pregnancy, the young man watched all three Star Wars movies a lot of times next to his wife in an attempt to add another fan into the family.

- "Look, son, that's Princess Leia. They don't know it yet but Luke and Leia are twins and Darth Vader, the creepy guy in the black mask, is their father." – he whispered, holding his little boy in his lap. A hand on his torso and the other on the baby's foot, when he turned to look at his dad.

- "Yeah, I was as shocked as you are when we found out. I was with your uncles Dustin, Will and Lucas at the movies when suddenly Darth Vader says 'Luke, I am your father'... Wow!" – said Mike, recreating the exact same expression he had all those years ago.

He knew of course that the baby didn't understand a word of what he was talking about, yet he kept on talking while his own mind imagined his son's response. To him, those imaginary chats between him and his son were essential because he wanted to be a dad, to be present and interested in his little boy. It begun when the baby was still inside Eleven's womb when Mike would lean to it and read the belly *Cosmos*, by Carl Sagan while she played with his curls and loved the infinite sweetness and attention Mike gave to the little one growing inside.

The baby looked at Mike's hand on his chest and started playing with it, exploring his fingers with his own little ones, feeling curious about the shiny thing around dad's finger and he lean to taste his father's hand. The paediatrician had suggested them to let their kid taste anything he wants because that's how babies discovered the world around them.

They both loved to see him explore on his own way. He didn't walk yet but they could easily find him next to the coffee table without making any noise and trying his best to stand up on his own. They knew that for all parents, – all good parents at least –, every little thing their kids would do would be an incredible accomplishment. But for them after waiting so long for him to come, the fact that he was there growing every day, discovering the world around him, laughing with that beautiful two teeth smile and those curious eyes under long dark eyelashes; was the empiric proof that miracles were real.

Their son was, without a doubt, their most precious treasure. They would do anything for him because they loved him beyond words, beyond any boundaries, beyond imagination itself. He was their little thing created by the love they held since the moment they met, he was the outgrowth of their union, the life created out of pure, real love.

Almost an hour later, when the Death Star was destroyed and Princess Leia honoured Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, the movie came to an end and Mike looked at his baby to check if he had fallen asleep again, but no. He was still very much awake.

- "Hey, you hold on the entire movie. I think that mom watching

these movies like a hundred times was worth it." – he smiled, lifting the baby up to his level and talking to him before hugging him and kissing his cheek. The boy laughed.

- "Aren't you the cutest?" – Mike whispered, holding his son in his arms and standing up. He took the VHS and placed it back next to the other movies then just stood there rocking the baby while humming the Imperial March and making him giggle, clapping his hands softly against his father's face. The baby looked around the furniture and pointed with his little finger to Mike and El's prom night picture. He smiled and allowed him to get close to the framed picture without grabbing it, still the baby laughed and bounced happily.

- "Yes, sweetie, that's mom and dad. That was the night we had our senior prom and your mommy was breathtaking beautiful, wasn't she? I still remember the look on Hopper's face when she came out of her room wearing *that* dress and the look he immediately gave to me." – he chuckled, leaning to his son like he was telling a big secret. – "I think your grandfather knew what was going to happen later that night, even before I did."

On that moment, nor Mike or the baby realized Eleven had came back from the store and she was leaning against the threshold between the kitchen and the living room, watching her husband and her son with a wide smile. She always said Mike was the sweetest, caring young man ever lived but, since she told him she was pregnant, his caring and his never-ending love kept beating a record on a daily basis. He was, somehow, a better man every day, a better husband and a better father, even when he was already the very best.

- "Do you like to see our pictures, little guy? Well, let's see..." - he started to look out for one specific picture when he found it. There they all were, at fourteen.

It was a picture of the party on the first Halloween Eleven could celebrate with them in 1985. Dustin dressed as Chewbacca, Lucas as 3-CPO, Max – who lost a bet to Lucas – was dressed as R2-D2. Will was dressed as Luke Skywalker, Eleven as Princess Leia of course and Mike as Han Solo. It had been one of the best nights of his life. Seeing his girlfriend – back then – enjoy as much freedom as them; seeing her running thrilled and accelerated and good-scared from the

decorations and everyone's costumes had been spectacular. She was amazed by everything, in every decoration, in every candy she received, in every prank she'd take Mike's hand feeling so excited and wanting to share all of it with him. Her smile was the biggest he had seen until then, her eyes were shining and he could see in her eyes that she was just as happy as she always dreamed to be, because she was *free*.

Mike and Eleven had talked about what to say to the baby about her past. For the time being they didn't have anything figured out yet since, every time they'd start talking about it, they changed their mind from the last time. Sometimes they thought that not telling him was the best idea, in case it'd open some old wound on her; and on the other hand, they wanted to tell him the truth because they didn't want to hold any secret with their son and then, again, they went back to think that some secrets were okay if it protected him. In the end it was only Eleven's choice since it was actually her decision, her history and he would support anything she decides to do. Besides they already had made their mind about one thing, and that was that she'd only use her powers in front of the baby now that he was little but, once he'd start to understand that what mommy could do was not in his imagination she'd stop using them, at least until they set their mind on what to tell him and when he'd be all grown up to understand what kind of things never to repeat outside his family.

- "That night we got a ridiculous amount of candy but, you know what the best part was?" – he asked the baby while he was still looking at the picture and the little boy was looking at him. Mike had a big smile on his lips and a deep look on his eyes filled with wonderful nostalgia and happiness. – "Watching your mother being free. So free and happy that, more than once that night, I felt so touched that I found myself wiping my eyes before she'd catch me crying. The freedom she always dreamed of was that night and... I fell in love with her all over again." – he whispered, kissing his little boy's head. – "Don't tell mom."

El, who was listening while Mike and the baby were completely oblivious of her presence, couldn't help but start welling up by knowing that that night she so clearly remembers, Mike had been crying out of happiness when she thought he had allergies. Because

he loved her, yes she knew he loved her but, as the years went by, he could still surprise her with his feelings just like he did on her first birthday.

- "She looked gorgeous, don't you think?" – he said, pointing at his wife on the white robes from her costume. – "Can I tell you another secret, son? When I saw you mom dressed like that, it was at that moment that something happened to me: I had the sudden revelation that, one day, I was going to marry her. Maybe it was the costume, I don't know, but when she stepped out of your grandfather's van and walked towards me, I could actually *see* her walking down the aisle on a wedding dress ready to become my wife." – he said in a whisper.

Mike caressed his son's cheek with the back of his fingers. – "I hope that, someday, you can fall in love with someone the same way I love your mom. From every infinitesimal atom in my body to the furthest galaxy in this infinite universe."

The little boy, whose eyes were fix on Mike's, gave him a big smile behind his pacifier and he laughed in response, caressing his head and kissing his forehead again. That little creature had absolutely no idea of how deep his mark went on his parent's hearts since the first second of his existence. They lived mesmerized by his perfection since the day he was born. Just like the indestructible bond Mike and Eleven shared as a couple, another bond between them and their baby was created from the moment his heart started beating inside the womb. And then such bond became unbreakable when they saw him for the first time on the delivery room. But when the baby opened his mouth and cried life in his lungs, his voice was a spell cast upon both El and Mike. A spell that turned a wife and a husband into a mother and a father. A love spell, because the love they've shared since they first met was now there, breathing, crying and living in the form of a new human being. The life they made. Their first son.

- "And we love you just as much, little guy. Since the moment we knew you were coming even before meeting you, the joy you have brought to us is greater than anything we could've imagined or explain. We will love you every single day of our lives until the day we die and then, we will love you even more."

By that time, Eleven was covering her mouth with both hands to stop her sobbing from alerting Mike and her son of her presence, but her tears were pouring out from her eyes. It may be silly but witnessing those bonding moments between her boys, seeing all that happiness and such love in the family she created with Mike; made her compare the loneliness at the beginning of her life and then look at the house and the life she has now, feeling eternally thankful to life itself for making that young man, her destination.

Mike just stood there for a second looking at his baby boy, loving the way he looked so fascinated with the things he said like every time his parents talked to him. Even when they were perfectly aware that he didn't understand a word of the things they say, there were times when Mike and El could look into his eyes and think that, somehow, he just *knew*.

- "We had a bet with mom. I thought you would be a girl and she was right by saying you were a boy. Therefore, she had to choose your name but..." – Mike pointed to the picture they had been talking about. – "She knew I had a name for the girl, so mommy instead of calling you something else, allowed me to choose your name inspired on the one I had. I wanted to give you the name of the greatest hero in the galaxy." – he whispered, poking his son on his nose and the baby giggled. – "Our own Luke."

El was about to make her presence known and let them see that she had been listening to their special moment when Mike spoke again.

- "Can I tell you something else?" – asked Mike to his kid, while he was holding him against his chest and his lips were still kissing his bold little head. He just loved the scent of his baby. – "I think mom, somehow, knew you would be a boy. I wouldn't be exactly surprised, you know?" – he said with a smile. – "The force is strong with her. She is basically a Jedi."

Eleven had to bite her lip to stop herself from laughing when the baby looked at his dad as if he understood.

- "Yeah, mommy is a Jedi." – whispered Mike playfully, rubbing the tip of his nose with the baby's little one, making him laugh harder and looking in his eyes. Those beautiful big eyes like El's, like her...

Suddenly, while he saw his son playing with his hands, Mike had another revelation: if Eleven was like a Jedi, if she had the force then...

He looked at the little table where they had the phone, a notepad and a pen, then he looked at his son and then back at the pen, holding his baby tighter and getting closer to it.

- "I wonder..." – he said softly, looking at his little boy, so cute, so innocent. It was just curiosity, nothing like what that man did to his wife, but the idea that came onto his mind was like a mystery that, maybe, had an answer. He took his little hand and pointed towards the pen and saw the baby. He didn't really expected anything to happen but...

There! The pen they used to write phone numbers or messages suddenly started shaking and slowly it was lifted in the air by an invisible force and was suspended two feet from the table for about five seconds until Mike let go his son's hand and hugged him, kissing his head and rocking him like they did when he needed to be calmed down, but it really was *him* who needed to relax.

- "My son... is a Jedi." – he said, dumbfolded. – "Luke, you *are* a Jedi." – his voice was barely a whisper, his eyes were wide open, his jaw had dropped to the floor. He was in shock but then the sound of someone's laughter made him turned around and his cheeks went red faster than ever.

Because there was Eleven, his wife, with his hand pointing to where the pen was and trying her best not to fall and start rolling on the floor laughing.

- "Oh my God, honey, you should have seen your face!" – she said leaning to the wall, trying to wipe her tears but failing miserably. She just couldn't stop her giggles caused by Mike's both sweetness and innocence. And he, even when at first felt a little insulted, looked at his son laughing as well and then he started laughing too.

- "Luke, mom just pulled a prank on dad. It is time to show her the dark side of the force." – he said in a dramatic, deep voice on his baby's ear who laughed even harder and then he run to Eleven for his

revenge.

She pretended to run just a bit before her son's arms caught her, hugging her by the neck lovingly while he kept laughing in her ear, filling Eleven's heart with the most wonderful music she had ever listened while Mike held her by the waist and started kissing and biting her neck and shoulder playfully.

Eleven was sure that if she looked for the word 'happiness' on the dictionary, there would be attached a picture of them right in that moment.

When Mike decided she had enough punishment, he let her carry the baby and wiped her joyful tears from her cheeks with his thumb before kissing his wife's lips. – "You are lucky that I'm so in love with you, El." – he said with a big smile, actually he always thought that he was the lucky one.

She smiled back. – "I love you too, Mike." – she said between giggles, trying to catch her breath and looking at the man who was her everything.

But of course, every sweet moment has to come to an end and Luke knew exactly how to end it by making his business and needing a new diaper.

- "Whoa, talking about the dark side..." - Mike joked and Eleven had to burry her face on her baby's neck not to burst into waves of fresh laughter.

- "Please, stop or I'll pee." – she pleaded.

Mike smiled back and kissed her lips and her cheek tenderly before wrapping her shoulders and hugging her while they started walking to their baby's room.

- "Did you get the chocolate chips?"

- "Yes, but I had to go to the supermarket and you have no idea how many people were there, honey. So crazy."

While Mike and El kept talking and she told him about the unusually

crowded supermarket and then telling him how sweet it was to witness the little chat he and the baby had when he told him about that Halloween night in 1985; none of them noticed that the baby had dropped his pacifier. And they, while laughing and joking, also didn't noticed that their son, who was leaning on El's shoulder was looking at his green pacifier on the carpet until it trembled and flew in the air straight to the mouth where it belonged.

Luke Wheeler smiled happily and rested his head on his mommy's shoulder, enjoying the sound of his parents voices and closing his eyes and Mike and Eleven changed his diaper and put him for a nap completely unaware that the force was also strong with their son.

oOoOoOoOoOo

*Hi everyone! Well I hope that you guys enjoyed this chapter. I had it in mind for a long time and, by the way, **STAR WARS** belongs to **George Lucas** and – now, I think – also **Disney's**.*

*Okay so I want to thank **disneyprincess315** who helped me decide the order of this chapter and the ones that'll follow. Little spoiler, next one we'll be back on their teenagehood.*

*Also, I want to say something to the people who doesn't review: I know it is a bit of a drag to leave a comment but, even when I'm not forced to write, I do it because you guys enjoy it and I know because I get the e-mails from the favourites and follows. I love those mails but, you know? I do a lot of stuff, A LOT and still find the time to sit and write. It takes me a few days to write a chapter in my natural language and then a few days more to translate it in English. But reviews only take 2 minutes so **PLEASE, leave a comment**.*

*Now, I just want to thank to all those people who always review my stories. Let me tell you guys that **you are all the best** and I keep writing because your support means A LOT. – hugs hugs –*

Well that said, if you guys have any request, you can always pm me. You are wonderful!

Ohh! There's a clue for my next – new – story hidden in there.

Until next time!

5. Blind Rage

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Rated: T. / Family – Romance – Humour. / (Eleven & Mike); Dustin; Will; Lucas; Max; Karen.

xx

BLIND RAGE

September 27th, 1985.

If Eleven has to classify her days since she started to have a normal life, she had to acknowledge herself as a person who lived in little segments and she also had to admit that she wasn't very fond of changes, once she was comfortable with something. One of the reasons why she hated Math is because in every new class there were less numbers and more letters – so dumb – and it was constantly changing, turning messy and she had to solve the problems given by those changes. *Yeah right.* But, on the other hand, she loved Science and Literature. In Science she had simple facts that really happened, she could find herself understanding the world which she recently was living in and how all came to be from one little particle somewhere; and with Literature it was the same. She had to read novels, analyze them and, even when she had to accept other people's opinions, – being that she never liked the fact that people could think different from her –, it was another of her favourites subjects.

Those little segments were what is normally called 'routine' and her routine was a bunch of things she likes to do and the people with whom she likes doing them. Having class and lunch with the party, softball with Max and Art Class with Will – the only ones her boyfriend wasn't in – and, of course the best segment of all: *Mike*. Everyday he waited for her at the school door, the kiss they shared as a hello, those kisses they managed to share during the day, the secret notes they so sneaky exchanged during class; walking hand in hand around school and holding him from his back when he biked her

back to the cabin or his house on Fridays to hang out and then go eat ice cream on 'Lover's Delight'.

Of course much like any person she found things in her day that she liked and didn't like that contradicted each other. For example: Eleven hates orange. It was annoying, noisy (somehow), presumptuous, cheesy and she hated that people wear it... Yet she loved it on Max hair or in her juice for breakfast. It may seem silly to think about it but it was a good analogy to explain herself what she felt about the life she was discovering; the life that, sometimes, made her feel dizzy, scared but also so so great.

With Mike it was pretty much the same. She loves Mike more than anything, than anyone, her boyfriend and best friend. She adored his permanent caring, she adored how much he spoiled her – even when her dad told him he shouldn't do it, he still did and she was very happy with it –; she adored that Mike always waits for her at the school entrance, that he holds her hand, that he walks her to her locker where he discovered the picture she had of him on it, held by a bunch of little hearts stickers and she loved dying from embarrassment because of it. She, *oh boy*, she loves kissing him all the time, she just adored how he always wanted to give her a ride back to the cabin or the Police Station, she adored how even without asking him, he always wanted to help her with her homework and always paid attention. But, just like the orange, there was something bugging her and that was that, sometimes, she wondered if she was getting all of Mike's time. Maybe she should give him more time to do other stuff but as soon as Mike looked at her with those deep chocolate eyes, any resolution she had went flying away and Eleven allowed herself being a little selfish and simply enjoy him beside her. And, truth be told, they actually did a lot of stuff with the party so, what was the point about doing them separately? Besides, and that was a matter of fact, Eleven proclaimed her ownership on Mike so, yeah. Mike belongs to *her*, period.

Anyway, she had a routine and she loved every minute of it just the way it was. Maybe that was the reason why, one day when she crossed the school doors to meet her friends and her boyfriend after class, it took Eleven barely two seconds to see that something wasn't right, because there they were Dustin, Lucas, Will and Max... and no

Mike.

Eleven was all smiley as she walked out of school to meet the party by their bikes and she was looking forward to sit behind her boyfriend while they ride back to his house and do whatever homework they had and then take a nap under the fort before their date at the ice cream shop; but when she went outside to find the boys and Max all talking at the same time in a circle and immediately falling silence when they noticed her, Eleven almost heard an alarm shouting inside her brain. Because Mike knew it was Friday, he knew she was supposed to go with him and he never *ever* changed his routine when El is a part of it.

- "Where's Mike?" – El asked, frowning and worrying.

The look on her friend's faces did nothing to calm her down.

- "Hey El, wanna come to my house? Billy isn't home and we could just have a..." - Max started rambling, trying to come up with something.

- "Girl's night." – finished Lucas and his girlfriend looked at him both amused and ashamed.

- "Yeah, that, a girl's night." – she said. – "You know, getting some distance from these dorks, am I right?"

Her tone wasn't convincing at all, even Eleven noticed she was trying way too hard to sound relaxed. There was definitely something wrong, not only with Max but with the weird, big, creepy smile on her friend's faces and the way they kept staring at her.

It wasn't like she was uncomfortable around them, they were her friends too and she loved them all but there was something beyond Mike's absence, something about the way they kept smiling at her and also how they seemed to find Max's idea so good even when she insulted them. Not to mention that no one answered her question.

She could feel them getting anxious, nervous and something on Will's sleeve caught her attention when she saw him suddenly hiding his arm behind his back, although it wasn't fast enough for her to not

recognize the unmistakable stain of blood. The party looked at her in shock and that was the trigger that pulled her thoughts to find out what was going on, because that wasn't Will's blood, or Dustin's, or Lucas's or Max's...

- "Where's Mike?"

By the time she started to place her thoughts in order, a bunch of older teens walked out of the school, laughing and talking about a fight in the boy's locker room and how this kid got beaten by two guys.

And it all went to shit when Dustin lied. – "He went to the dentist!"

Eleven at first felt confused and worried but now, as those boys who were laughing because of a fight in the male's locker room, a dark cloud of blind rage covered her eyes and every peaceful thought in her mind. The blood on Will jacket's sleeve plus the weird attitude the party had and adding Dustin's lie to the fact that friend's don't lie made El go crazy in a matter of seconds.

Because she knew Mike went to the dentist last Monday and he didn't have another appointment until next month.

If that stain of blood belongs to the one she thought it did, Eleven was going to haunt the responsible for it and show him that no hell held as much rage as she does when someone touches what belongs to her.

She took a step towards Dustin and, as much as she likes him, she couldn't nor even wanted to hide the anger building inside her body and studied his features while she spoke again in, what in future years would be called, 'El's death whisper'.

- "Where is Mike?"

xx

- "I cannot believe this, Michael. Again with the bad behaviour? What is next, graffiti the bathroom and plagiarism essays? You've done so well since last November all of a sudden and then school just starts and you come home... like this!" – Karen was nagging her son while

walking hysterically across the kitchen, exaggerating things and stopping to keep fixing his broken lip.

- "Mom, stop, I'm okay. Let me do it, you're acting craz..." – the boy stopped talking when he realized the fire behind is mother's eyes, warning him to not keep talking like, at all.

Truth was he didn't even start the fight although he understood why his mom was acting like that. After Eleven disappeared, he had changed from the sweet nerdy boy he was to an obnoxious pre-teen who kept getting into troubles for selling essays, making doodles on the school's bathroom and talking back to teachers; but since El came back he also did. He went back to be that sweet kid he had always been and his mother was very, very pleased with having... him again.

But that day he had gym with the boys and the coach tested speed on them. Nothing too hard, he just had to run fast and he did, and scored a nine and then got back to the showers with the rest of the class. When he was changing his clothes, the problem introduced himself to him when Troy approached from behind and started pushing him to his locker while Mike was putting back his polo shirt.

- "Hey, Wheeler! Next time you cheat I'm gonna run you over with my dad's car!" – said Troy as a 'hello' talk.

He didn't cheat, he just won over him because since Mike got taller, he discovered that he was swift and gained tone, making gym a little easier for him. But he wasn't an athlete nor will he be.

Mike took a deep breath and ignored Troy, he didn't even worth the energy to explain that he not only won fair and square but also that his anger towards himself had a very simple explanation: and that was that Mike knew Troy hated how he, the 'Frog Face' was now a good inches taller than him and also the first one on getting a girlfriend. But he kept his mouth shut and exchanged a look with Will, who was beside him putting his jacket on.

- "You are such a freak, Wheeler, just like your fag friend." – Troy snapped, making Will his target so he could get Mike to talk back.

But Will just gave Mike a meaningful look, not even sore by that

asshole's words and simply begun walking to the door, ignoring Troy completely.

- "Hey, Frog face, answer to me you pussy! Have you lost your tongue somewhere?" – said Troy, pushing him again and, as Mike didn't even turned around, he tried something else. – "Maybe inside your whore girlfriend's pants?"

And that made the trick. Because while Dustin, Lucas and Will saw Mike clenching his jaw, they realized that Troy hit a nerve when he talked shit about Eleven, who was the light in his eyes. He turned around, slowly, and closed the gap between them.

Bingo.

Troy smiled. – "You know, I have been checking your girlfriend." – he said, a crooked smile on his face while he crossed his arms and lifted his head to reach Mike a little bit. Troy, stupid as he was, didn't remembered Eleven as the girl who he imagined two years ago, braking his arm with 'magic'. A therapist convinced him that it was only his imagination. – "If she likes hanging out with you, dorks, then I think she really is a freak. Plus she is dating you so... Damn! Tell me something Wheeler, is it true what they say about quiet girls?"

The guys went to grab Mike by the arm, calling for him and trying to keep him away from trouble. They knew that a mouth breather like Troy was more than ready to pick up a fight, yet Mike knew how to hurt him without even touching him. He just looked down at him and smiled.

- "Such big words for such a *little* stupid boy." – whispered Mike, emphasizing the word 'little' causing not only the cheers and whistles from the rest of the students in the locker room but also the embarrassment on Troy's face when he turned red.

Sadly nor Mike or his friends knew that James – Troy's sort of bodyguard and friend – was behind him like they planed and he unceremoniously pushed Mike, making him stumble into a bench and hit his head with a locker, making him feel dizzy and unprotected enough for Troy to take advantage on him and punch him hard on his eye and his lip. Mike punched back but as they heard the coach

approaching, Dustin took Mike by the collar of his shirt and dragged him outside, saving his ass from getting detention while Will took off his jacket and wrapped his face to stop the bleeding on his lip.

xx

But escaping detention was one thing and escaping his mother's scolding was something entirely different.

- "Okay, I'm done with your lip just don't touch it to much." – whispered Karen, checking her son's face with tenderness, just like any mom would do. As angry as she might be, she'd never be too angry not to worry about him. – "I'm going to put some ice in the bag to lower the heat from your eye, honey. It'll still be black but at least it won't be swollen anymore."

Mike nodded. His eye was already black and he would have to come up with something good before tomorrow to say to Eleven when he sees her. At least he knew the guys had probably told her something, he only hoped it was something convincing enough.

But suddenly he heard those bickering voices talking all together and he knew who they were because he could easily recognize them no matter what and, as the voices became clearer and clearer while Karen was humming a song and taking little ice cubs from the freezer, he already felt both hot on the cheeks and frozen on his chair.

- "Shit! Since when is she this strong?" – Max complained. She had her hands on Eleven's chest trying to push her back with the weight of her entire body and yet, her feet were sliding in the grass on the Wheeler's front lawn.

When the party arrived to Mike's house, Eleven jumped off Dustin's bike and started walking to her boyfriend's front door but as soon as she did, Will held her by the arm, Lucas by the other arm, Max pushed her and Dustin wrapped his arms around her from the back, trying to stop her. But of course it wasn't enough because no one would stop her from seeing Mike.

- "Is not strength, its power!" – Will whispered.

When they reached Mrs. Wheeler's car, the party turned to each other because Mike's mom was in the house so Lucas let go El's arm and run to open the front door which was always unlocked, giving that that was their designated hang out spot, yet they decided to clear the area and keep her from having telekinesis tantrum with the door.

Bad idea.

As soon as Eleven had the chance, she took her friends off of her with a flick of her mind and walked inside the house forgetting about the manners Hopper had been trying to teach her, ignoring the voices of her friends calling for her, forgetting about the fact that she should technically pretend she'd never been in Mike's house before when she walked from the living room to the kitchen with ease and passing by Karen, ignoring her completely. She stood there in front of Mike – who covered his left eyes stupidly – and looked at him with pure rage written all over her face.

Her eyes widened.

When Mike saw her coming and the rest of the party standing on the threshold between the living room and the kitchen, exchanging astonished looks between Mrs. Wheeler and him, he felt his cheeks flushing pink. The boy looked at his girlfriend, she was so gorgeous with her pink overalls, her yellow heart's shirt and a blue pin holding back her curls, and yet she also looked so freaking dangerous.

- "Who the *hell* did this!?"

Mike hesitated before speaking, he looked at his friends and then back at his girlfriend noticing that it was the first time El was in front of his mother.

- "Hi bab..."

- "Who the hell did this to you, Mike!?" – Eleven asked again, this time shouting and closing the gap between them and leaning to his level, taking his face in her hands carefully and checking his swollen split lip.

Eleven ignored completely the fact that she had people around them.

When Dustin was forced to say the truth, – a part of it at least –, she jumped on his bike and made them drive her to Mike's house to check on him. The anger had blinded her, she didn't even care that his family might be there, she didn't even care what her friends kept telling her, she didn't even care about being nice, sweet and polite; all she cared about was that Mike was currently covering his left eye and his lip was split, dry blood on it. His bottom lip, *her* bottom lip.

- "You didn't have to come up here, really. I'm fine." – whispered Mike, placing his other hand on Eleven's shoulder in an effort to calm her down but, the look she gave him was identical to the one his mom gave to him when he arrived to his house, bleeding.

She was so worried for him and also so angry and hearing Mike saying that he was fine, well... It was like throwing gasoline to a raging fire.

- "Are you fucking serious!?" – she yelled, causing the light to buzz but Lucas pretended to be him, tapping the switch on the wall. – "What did you think I would have done when I left school and saw all of our friends but not you? Did you actually believe that I wasn't going to notice blood on Will's jacket's sleeve?"

Mike looked down while Eleven kept on spilling truth out of her mouth, moving her arms frantically in the air, raising her usually calm and sweet voice to him and not caring about all the people there to see. Still Mike looked at his friends, exasperated.

- "I told you guys to hide the jacket." – he huffed. The party just raised their hands in surrender, not knowing what to say.

- "Don't you dare blaming on them, Michael Wheeler. Just... Look at you! Look at your lip and..." – she stopped, trying to push Mike's hand away from his left eye. – "Let me see."

- "It's nothing, really." – answered Mike, covering his eye with both hands and struggling with Eleven who was trying to look at the punch he so clearly had. Even when it may be awkward and a little violent for others to witness that moment, Mike couldn't stop smiling because he knew that under her tug of war and that anger, his girlfriend was ultimately worried about him, and she was worried because she cares

for him.

But Karen, who apparently was invisible for that unknown girl who unceremoniously walked into the house, decided to interrupt the little fight that girl and his son were having. She was utterly surprised when she saw and heard that girl talking to Mike as openly and as free as she never seen before, not even with the boys, yet the way she was trying to push Mike's hand away from his face was less than tender.

- "Wow hold on, stop it you two, calm down or he will get hurt." – Karen said, getting their attention and firmly but kindly pulling them apart.

But Eleven just didn't care who was talking to her.

- "He is hurt already!" – El snapped, turning back and fixing her eyes on Mike's. – "Was it Troy, wasn't it?" – she asked looking at the party all falling silent and looking at their feet and then at her boyfriend who did the same. Their silence was all she needed. – "Oh I swear I am gonna kick his as..."

- "Hey, language!" – Karen interrupted.

Karen's head was about to explode from all the emotions and questions dancing in her brain. She felt like the world was upside down with Mike having troubles in school again, with the boys weirdly silent when they usually were bickering at each other in excitement and a girl she didn't know coming into the house like she had been there before and talking – shouting, actually – to her son like if she had some special green light to speak to him like that. She *had* to ask.

- "Hang on, let's start again, okay?" – said the older woman, looking at the teenage girl. – "I'm sorry, sweetie and you are?"

- "Jane Hopper." – answered Eleven, not even looking at her.

- "My girlfriend." – whispered Mike, blushing deep red.

Well, at least that was a little more original than showing one day to an awkward conversation and saying *'Hi mom, this is my girlfriend.*

Bye.'

Yet the confession plus the heat of the moment and the shock from the entire situation took Karen by surprise. She felt dizzy, forced to step back with her mouth slightly open, looking at the boys who were carefully walking backwards to the front door and leaving the house.

Yeah, she wanted to do that too.

At that moment Mike looked at his mother over El's shoulder for a second and noticed how shocked she was, even more than last week when they heard Holly saying 'crap', and then he looked back at his girlfriend who took her opportunity and pulled Mike's hand away from his face.

And there he was thinking she couldn't get angrier.

- "Oh my God, look at your face!" – yelled Eleven when she could finally see the punch Troy gave him. His eye was swollen, half closed and it had blood vessels broken all around his eye's socket. It was red, almost mauve already turning purple on the centre. It was a hell of a punch.

Mike felt very self-conscious.

- "What would you have told me if I'd never forced the truth out of Dustin?"

- "Uhhh..."

- "That you fell over?"

- "Uhhh... Yes?"

- "Over *what*? A stone, a mountain, a truck!?" – Eleven was definitely losing her grip, worried out of her mind for Mike's black eye.

Meanwhile, Karen still in shock was sitting on the couch a few feet away from those kids, looking at the girl who she just found out was Mike's girlfriend still yelling at him and nagging him like she did before but, this time, she didn't interrupt. She was right after all, besides the way she seemed so worried only meant that she cared for

him, right?

Since *when*? What *else* had she been missing? *How* didn't she notice before? In that year when Mike was so annoying and so difficult to deal with, he suddenly changed back and became the sweet kid she liked again. She didn't know what had made the trick because not only her son was back on being the nice boy he was but also, around November, he came back... better. Sometimes he just stood up from the table and offered to do the dishes, sometimes he asked her if she needed him to go pick up some groceries; he even offered to babysit Holly. It was amazing just how happy he seemed since then, even Ted noticed it. Mike was like under a spell, a permanent smile on his face and now she understood who was responsible for her son's happiness: the young girl with the pink overalls and yellow shirt.

Suddenly, while the girl placed a hand on her hips staring at Mike and asking for an explanation and also checking his injuries with a soft tender hand against her sharp remarks; Karen Wheeler was able to see... *something*. Not only she began feeling comfortable with that girl in her kitchen but she also saw the relationship between them.

It was obvious in the way that – Jane, was it? – was moving with ease, that she'd been there before. Maybe on Fridays, when Karen had aerobics and then she picked up Holly from kinder garden in her way to the supermarket, Mike and his girlfriend spent the afternoons in the house and then left to have a date. Now she understood why her son ate ice cream so often.

The idea of picturing her son, her not-so-little son going on dates with a girl was, all of a sudden, very cute. She also noticed the look on Mike's eyes and the way he smiled at the girl. That was pure adoration and she could also see that, under all the nagging, that young girl looked at Mike with the same level of affection... Maybe even love.

Love.

Sure they were young to feel that strongly but something in her guts told her that if she said those two kids were in fact in love, then she wouldn't be wrong.

The boy spoke again, obliviously pulling his mother away from her thoughts since he forgot there were people in there.

- "I... fell over you?" – offered Mike in a very desperate, sweet and pathetic attempt to appease Eleven.

It worked. The absurd, cheesy and beautiful way Mike spoke to her felt like if she had taken a cold shower, freezing all the scolding in her throat and causing her to smile at him, then frown and smile... And frown again.

Goddamn it! Why did he have to be *so cute*?

Not knowing whether to feel flattered or exasperated, Eleven turned to the kitchen counter and took the bag Karen had been filling with ice and finished it, getting back to Mike and smacking the ice bag against his left eye.

- "Ouch!"

- "You are such a bonehead." – whispered El but she leaned and placed a kiss in the corner of his mouth, caressing his cheek and placing a chair next to him, while she held the ice bag on her boyfriend's eye. She couldn't help but smile, he couldn't help it either.

- "But if you get in a fight again, I will be the one hitting you with a ton of bricks."

The threat caused both teenagers to laugh hysterically and when Eleven leaned to kiss Mike on the lips, Karen was as shocked as before by witnessing the kiss those kids shared and the way they so simply did it, so naturally fitting with each other's mouths. She immediately knew that the girl and her not-so-little boy had probably been sharing kisses for a while already, so instead of watching she decided to give them some privacy and walk out of the house and go buy some band-aids and pain killers to the drugstore.

A couple of minutes later, Mike and Eleven noticed, a little relieved actually, that they were alone and they could speak without people hearing.

- "I am so gonna break his leg this time." – said Eleven while she

studied Mike's face, holding the ice bag.

He caressed her cheek with the back of his fingers. – "You don't have to, El. I did give him a punch, you know?"

- "Wow, a whole punch?" – she joked.

Mike rolled his eyes – one at least – and she couldn't hold back a snicker, none of them did. Anyway she hoped that whatever punch Mike gave him, would be very noticeable but still, Troy wasn't going to get away with it. As soon as that asshole has his next running tracks test, she would be there watching him and making sure that he can't jump the obstacles fast enough.

- "He dared touching my stuff." – El softly said, leaning towards Mike and placing a small careful kiss on his lip, more specifically on his bottom lip. – "Look what he did to my lip."

Mike giggled. – "It's actually *my* lip." – he teased, although he knew what she meant.

Eleven nudged him and gave him a knowing look. – "Well, I thought I earned my ownership over it after making out with you so much."

Mike couldn't nor even tried to hold back laughter. He just couldn't believe how lucky he was. – "I thought you meant me when you said he touched your stuff."

- "Duh, of course. You are *all* mine." – El snorted. She was amused by Mike joking around and yet, while she kept noticing some other injuries on her boyfriend's gorgeous face, she also made a mental note to not only break Troy's leg but also make him fall and lose a tooth for every single cut she finds on Mike's skin.

- "I'm sorry I lied, El. I really didn't want you to be worried." – he apologized and El, who was sitting next to him, stood up and sat down on his lap. She kissed him.

- "Friends don't lie, Mike. And neither do boyfriends." – said Eleven, playing with the locks on his hair. – "But I understand. Just, promise me you'll let me know if you are having troubles, okay?"

He nodded and leaned to kiss her again. – "I promise."

Eleven let the ice bag on the table and went back on Mike's lap, wrapping her arms around his shoulders while he did the same around her waist, keeping her close in a tight hug. She smiled in content, finally kissing him like they should have done from the moment they finished school that day. It was a little tricky though, given that they had to be extra careful because Mike was still sore and she could feel him whimpering when the kiss turned more passionate, still he didn't stop kissing her.

- "You know..." – Mike whispered when they had to come up for air, Eleven started kissing his cheek. – "I do find something positive from all of this, besides you taking care of me of course."

- "Nobody can take care of you better than me." – El's voice was muffled against Mike's skin while she started kissing her way from his cheek to his jaw, to his neck.

The teenager simply laughed. – "At least we don't have to worry about how and when you will meet my mom."

Mike and Eleven laughed quite a lot after that, not to mention when Ted got back from work and found his fourteen year old boy making out with a girl... against the kitchen wall.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hi everyone! I'm not dead, I've just been super busy and stressed. Some of you know that in my condition I have to look out for my health but no worry, it's all cool.

*Okay, now I know this chapter is different from the other chapters but I thought it might be funny. I hope you guys enjoyed it. Thank you for your continue support and, as always, you know **I'll keep uploading as long as I have feedback** so **PLEASE, leave a comment!***

I'd like to make an announcement too. I may upload two more chapters and then I'll start a new story – Mileven, same timeline – that will contain three chapters. I thought about adding it to this series but I think it deserves its own space. But don't worry, I will return to this one as soon as

*that one is over. For the time being, there's more to come in 'Weird Stuff'.
That said, If you guys have any request at all, you can always ask for it.
Until next time!*

6. Flo

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Rated: T. / Romance - Humour. / (Eleven & Mike), Will, OC.

xx

FLO

December 15th, 1989.

Eleven looked at the glass door of the pharmacy and saw the unusual emptiness in the streets for a Friday afternoon. The sky was dark gray, covered up by a thick layer of clouds and she was sure that Hawkins was going to welcome the first snow of the season any minute now, which was probably the reason why there were only few people outside. And she was bored out of her mind.

She checked her pink watch – a gift from her boyfriend – and saw the hour. 3:05 p.m; she sighed. She still had another four hours to go, although saying that in was only four was a technicality because every minute felt like an hour, or a day, and she just couldn't wait until the night of the Sunday would arrive and with it, Mike would finally be back.

El smiled.

She couldn't believe they had actually survived the first semester away from each other, with Mike in college but they did. It hadn't been easy, *oh no*, but he had kept his promise and put so much effort to keep contact with her, calling for an hour three – sometimes four – times a week. He even made time for those phone calls in between his tight schedule, making room for her with the classes, practices and his part-time job his former boss at RadioShack got him with a friend he had who run the same franchise, a couple of blocks from his MIT dorm. And even with all those things Mike did everyday, he had manage to find the time and give it to Eleven so she would know how

much he missed her, how much he loved her, how much he needed her. Her Mike, hers, from the tip of his thumbs to the last one of his hairs.

"Say the word, say it up 'cause the word is love" Eleven whispered a tiny piece of the song Mike sang to her over the phone when he called her on her birthday, the song he had send her by mail recorded on tape so she could listen anytime she wants. It was like an homage for the song he played for her on the first birthday she got to celebrate years ago.

The older couple walking in the drugstore frowned at her, just like the girl at the back of the store who was wondering which nail polish she should take and Eleven felt her cheeks burning while she pay attention to her chores at work and continued to tag the new line of antacids that arrived that very day.

She sat back again and sighed, this time feeling even more bored. She liked her job, there weren't many things to do given that Mr. Keene – her boss – had a big store where people could take the stuff they needed and she was only there to cash the customers and attend those who needed prescription drugs. But that day, given that Mike was coming back in two days, she felt like the hours were sucking her life from her body and she couldn't help but keep watching through the glass door and across the street where the RadioShack Mike used to work in high school was, and she missed him a lot more.

But she really needed to calm down because the worst part was over. The first semester, the hardest, was over and Mike not only would be back for the winter recess but, he would also be away from the disease Eleven felt hovering above them; that rotten shadow of horror and disgrace.

Flo.

No, not Flo from the Police Station, she loved that Flo. No, the Flo Eleven was thinking about was the classmate and new super *female* friend Mike made in college, the one El wanted to crush with her powers.

On those phone calls they had several times a weeks when they

talked about many things like their friends, their families and all the stuff that happened, like Joyce and Hopper getting marry soon, El felt so relaxed. There were of course other kind of calls they had and enjoyed, those calls they had when Hopper wasn't home and she said – breathed – stuff to Mike and he'd say other stuff that made her feel *so good* too. No matter what kind of phone calls they'd do, there was always the undeniable love they held to one another and, when they had to say goodbye, Mike would always tell her how much he loves her and how much he missed her. And then there were those calls when El heard someone talking to Mike on the other side of the line right before he said goodnight.

Eleven couldn't hear that voice clearly, just a soft roar but she did heard how Mike laughed when that person spoke to him, and when she asked him who it was, it was the first time she felt an alarm howling inside her head.

"It's just Flo, baby."

She'd never seen her, she didn't knew her and never meeting her made El feel like if she was a ghost ready to attack her and there was nothing she could do to foreseen said attack and fight back. She couldn't go the void to see that girl Flo and know what was she dealing with, nor even know what Mike did with her.

The void. That had been a huge mistake.

She felt tempted to go there but every time she felt the urge to go to the void, the fear of finding something and the guilt from her doubts stopped her; yet there were two times when that sick curiosity beat everything. The first time she saw Mike was on a Wednesday morning. He had been sitting in what was probably a classroom, paying attention like he always did and biting the end of his pencil. Eleven sighed happily and calm, admiring the way he looked so focused on his class and how his lips kept closing around his pencil. But just when she was ready to leave, something seemed to touch Mike on his ear and he looked at someone next to him that she couldn't see.

"Flo, stop it." Mike had said but he laughed as well and Eleven felt like throwing up.

The second time she went to the void another alarm howled in her head louder than the first one.

That time she had chosen a Saturday night to go visit Mike and she found him in his dorm, more specifically in his bed completely asleep and surrounded by books. He looked so exhausted and at the same time he looked so cute. El felt the sudden need to run her fingers in his hair and wake him up to tell him to get in the bed and rest properly, that he had studied enough already and that it was no good for him to get tired up that much; just like she did when they were in high school. Then, while she had her face inches away from his – in the void at least –, listening to his steady breathing and wishing she could lean and kiss him on those delicious full lips, something went right through her and hit Mike on the chest, waking him up.

The only thing Eleven could hear right before everything turned into white smoke and she's be back in her room, was Mike growling but also laughing when he talked to somebody.

"Ugh, Flo, could you please just stop throwing your smelly shoes at me every time you take your clothes off?"

That bitch was in Mike's dorm! Not only she was there but she actually stepped inside his dorm not even needing him to go open the door, in the middle of the fucking night and walking in with ease to take off her clothes and throw shoes at him while he was asleep.

Who the hell did she think she is?

After that night, El stopped visiting him on the void. It wasn't easy but after a long chat with Joyce, she had come to the conclusion that all her fears were actually the result of her twisted imagination trying to sabotage her relationship. Because, if she stopped to think about it, both times El went to see Mike, he hadn't been doing anything wrong and she honestly couldn't blame him for the things Flo did. Besides, once she washed her fears off of her, Eleven felt too guilty for even having doubts of Mike and his loyalty.

And she trusted Mike, of course she does. She trusted blindly on the love he always held for her since the moment they kissed for the first time in the cafeteria before she disappeared, to those days when he

made room in his schedule so he could call her, Mike was always putting El first.

So, feeling relaxed and convinced that the bond she had with her boyfriend was as strong as ever, El could finally stop thinking nonsense and, instead, she leaned to put every ounce of her negativity and murderous desires on the real and true enemy; on *her*, on *Flo*.

That Flo, even when Mike didn't talk about her so often – thank God – he still mentioned they went to have pizza together after a big test. That Flo that used to walk on her boyfriend's bedroom just when Mike was talking to her over the phone. That same Flo that studied next to Mike for hours on the library.

Flo. The one that spent so much time with Mike in Massachusetts, made Eleven feel insecure about herself because, even when she never met her and therefore she couldn't tell if she was pretty or not; El knew that Flo was at least smart enough, because after all she was on the same college Mike had worked so hard to get into.

Flo, the one that studied next to him and ate pizza with him, and made him laugh and, – somehow – managed to befriend her attractive, smart, great in bed and perfect boyfriend Mike. The same Flo that spent infinite hours with him, that shared classes with him, that made essays with him and threw footwear at him any time she felt like it.

Flo, Flo, Flo, FLO!

Eleven snorted. At least she knew that Flo's feet smelled a lot.

"Ugh!" she growled when the labeller stuck and she had to put all the prices manually on the antacids, not even caring about the way the customers were looking at her.

Damn, maybe she could use an antacid herself because she just couldn't stop thinking about Flo and, even when she didn't know her, therefore she couldn't tell if she was blonde, brunette, chubby, tall or pretty; El knew for a fact that Flo spent hours trying to seduce Mike because, well... How couldn't she? Mike was simply irresistible.

But he would never fall for her, nuh-uh. Eleven was sure of it because she knew him and she was certain that Mike was madly, hopelessly in love with her.

Anyway, she couldn't stop thinking about that bitch and El never liked talking shit about people behind their backs if they didn't deserved it but... She did! Because Eleven knew that Flo was evil.

Evil, yeah that was the word. Flo wasn't just bad, no. Only an evil person would try to steal someone else's boyfriend because El was sure that Flo saw the picture Mike had of them next to his bed when they went to the beach that last summer; because Flo knew that Mike has a girlfriend back at home. Because she couldn't deny the care and devotion in his voice when he called El over the phone and that caring tone that was unmistakably romantic.

That Flo was bad because she knew all that and still insisted and tried to seduce him.

"Oh hi Mike, do you think this skirt looks good? Oh hi Mike, do you think this cleavage suits my boobs? Oh Mike, I think I sat on something. Would you check up my ass and tell me? Oh Mike"

Eleven murmured under her breath with a high pitched voice, mocking the way she thought Flo talked.

"Tramp." Eleven whispered again, while she took the boxes of antacid and started placing them in the shelf.

"Excuse me?" the girl who had been wandering around the nail polish section a couple of minutes ago was standing right in front of Eleven, frowning.

El froze and then started rambling the first nonsense she could think of. "Tampons! You are taking tampons too, I love tampons!"

Smooth.

The other girl paid for her nail polish and the box of feminine articles and left the drugstore, looking at her like she was crazy. When that girl left, El sighed again.

She really needed to relax and stop imagining things, after all Flo could try anything she wanted and say anything she pleases to Mike because Eleven knew that he would never, *ever* cheat on her and El also knew that Mike loved her more than anything in this world.

She knew that Mike was loyal and honest the same way she knew that the sun would come out every morning and, besides, he was coming home too for his winter recess on Sunday. Yeah, that wonderful, sent from the sky winter recess would give Mike and El four glorious weeks to catch up. Four glorious weeks that El would use to cover Mike with kisses and she would practically kidnap him so he could tell her everything about his days and, specially, to touch him and kiss him desperately and have sex with him so many times that when Mike gets back to college he would be covered with the hickeys she likes to give him; and he would return completely satisfied and a thousand times more in love.

Good luck competing with that, Flo.

Eleven grinned while she kept placing the boxes on the shelf when someone talked to her from the other side of the shop counter.

"Excuse me, miss, do I need prescription for a kiss?"

Eleven froze in place and opened her eyes so wide her eyes practically fell from the sockets. She turned around and found a young man right in front of her wearing the black thick corduroy coat she gave him for his birthday and a big, shiny smile causing Eleven brain to become a mush and drop every box she had in her hands; climbing the ticket counter and accidentally kicking a pile of analgesics and throwing herself in his arms.

They almost fell but he caught her right on time, like he always did.

"MIKE!"

She couldn't believe it, it must be a dream but it wasn't because, when she buried her nose in the crook of his neck, she could smell his perfume mixed the scent of his lemon shampoo she adored. Eleven wrapped her arms around his shoulders and her legs around his waist, while Mike giggled filling her ears with the most beautiful

music and wrapped one arm on her back and another under her, supporting her butt cheeks.

"Surprise!" his voice was pure joy and excitement.

"Mike, oh Mike!" El cried out, mixing joy and laughter with the lump in her throat. Her tears were out of happiness because her boyfriend was back in her arms and she didn't care about anything else. Not even the customers still there, or the security cameras above them.

The boy couldn't hold a snicker, moving his lips to his girlfriend's ear and kissing her, whispering sweetly. "Hi, El."

Eleven lifted her face just enough so she could finally kiss him like her life depends on it, and it did because her body was aching for him. She was desperate, thirsty and what she needed more than ever was to kiss the love of her life senseless.

Mike responded with the same intensity and passion, holding her tight to his body, causing Eleven to squeeze him with her limbs and he didn't mind it at the very least, he just wanted to kiss her. His full, warm lips biting and exploring her with the experience they earned from all those years since they started dating on the Snow Ball in 1984; those same perfect lips were kissing Eleven again after months and he was back home earlier than planned, for their fifth anniversary.

When they needed air again, Mike was the first one to speak because El found more interesting kissing his nose, his cheeks and every piece of him she could reach.

"Did I surprise you, El? I wanted to be home today because, you know," said Mike blushing. That day was special and when Eleven looked at him in the eyes again, she felt overwhelmed by the way he was looking at her.

Such deepness, such infinite love, such warmth, it was him just like she remembered with his gorgeous chocolate eyes and El could actually see that, like her, he had been incomplete for months but now he was there in the arms of each other's half.

Eleven nodded, placing their foreheads together, tears pouring out from her eyes. "You came earlier for our anniversary." She whispered, almost choking because she just couldn't believe how impossibly considerate he is.

Mike nodded too. "Yes, baby, because it's our anniversary and... because you get off at seven and you know what day it is, right?"

Eleven melted and knew that Christmas came earlier that year because Mike, – who was supposed to board a plane on Sunday afternoon and arrive to Indianapolis airport at night then take a bus to Hawkins –, not only came home for their anniversary but also to take her to the ice cream shop like he did, every Friday.

How could she ever doubt of him?

Right then Eleven started to cry her eyes out and fill him with kisses, not caring about the customers leaving the pharmacy, probably uncomfortable because the employee was making out with her boyfriend or because they were afraid the power would cut off because the lights kept blinking.

Five minutes after some mayor crying, Eleven untangled her legs from Mike's waist but she kept her arms around his neck, pulling him down for another kiss.

"I missed you so much, Mike!" said Eleven, her lips glued on his. "So, so much!"

Mike held her firmly by the waist when she climbed back down while they talked in between kisses, feeling just as happy as she was, finally feeling whole and spinning around with her feet barely touching the ground.

"I couldn't wait until Sunday, El, it was simply impossible so I called the airline and cancelled the flight. We left around midnight and drove almost without stopping other than in a few gas stations to eat something, refuel the car or using the rest room." he was drunk of love, his girlfriend lips making difficult for him to speak. He didn't mind it at all. "Hell, I'm so tired but I couldn't hold on anymore. I missed you so much I was practically hallucinating."

While she kept on kissing him, Eleven could hear Mike's feelings and she pulled apart a bit to study his features, noticing the exhaustion he had. She placed a soft hand on his face and caressed his freckles-studded cheekbones and run her thumb on the bags under his eyes. He leaned to her warm hand, wanting more of it.

God, how was it possible for two people to love each other that much?

"You look so tired, Mike." she said softly, preoccupation becoming clear in her tone. "You shouldn't have driven all night, it isn't safe."

His gesture was beautiful but also dangerous, although she didn't complain and wasn't going to nag him. She would have done the same.

Mike smiled and peck her lips. "Don't worry, El. Besides we took shifts behind the wheel."

Wait.

"We?" Eleven's voice became a whisper, suddenly feeling anxious about what was going to hear.

"Yeah, that crazy-ass insisted on coming, plus I thought it was a good opportunity for you two to meet." said Mike excitedly. He lifted his arm and waved to someone outside the door. "Flo, come in!"

FUCKING WHAT!?

How... When... Did he actually brought that whore to meet her!? Was that bitch really in their home-town?

Eleven immediately turned around feeling both shocked and angry before she could help it. She was going to meet the tramp that had been trying to steal her boyfriend away from her. At least she could now face what was she dealing with after picturing her face in her mind but, what was she doing there? Why did she drove fifteen freaking hours with him? What for?

... What?

When El turned around ready to see a girl of her age she didn't find any. Instead she found the blue chest from a thick jacket and her eyes had to look up to someone around Mike's stature and finally meet a chubby face, a gentle smile surrounded by a blonde beard and moustache like her dad and warm kind eyes.

"Jane, right? So nice to meet you at last! Mike had been talking about you non-stop since we met."

"..."

Mike, who was apparently completely unaware of the short-circuit on Eleven's brain, placed his hands on her shoulders while her mouth was hanging open. "Baby, I want you to meet Florian, my roommate."

Florian... Flo.

Oh.

"Uhm, hello?" said the young man again, this time exchanging a look with Mike while waving a friendly hand on El's face, causing her to wake up and, acting completely insane; she opened her arms and hugged the boy in front of her, laughing like crazy.

"Hi!" she yelled but felt so relieved that she didn't care. She just kept on laughing and the boy who was confused, amused and probably a little embarrassed too, pat her back a bit awkwardly and looked at Mike who was trying to hold back a snicker.

"Hey, I'm gonna get jealous." Mike joked yet he was fully laughing now and fun-loving the way his girlfriend immediately started bonding with his new friend.

Eleven became aware of how crazy she acted and pulled away from Mike's roommate, turning back to her boyfriend and blushing deep red and giggling, although it was out of embarrassment.

El stammered a bit. "I'm sorry i-it's just that he talked about Flo so much that I... wanted to meet you."

Well, she technically wasn't *lying*.

Both guys laugh openly but without mocking, they looked exhausted but it was perfectly understandable given the crazy amount of hours they drove.

"I told her we used to have pizza sometimes and she heard you walking into our dorm when we're on the phone." explained Mike to his friend, while wrapping Eleven's waist from behind and holding her against himself, like he always did.

"Oh, yeah." nodded Florian and looked back at her. "I apologize for showing up like this, Jane, but when your boyfriend said that he was going to drive fifteen fucking hours back to his home town after spending the entire night studying, after taking finals and after working at the store not even stopping for a fucking minute to rest; I said to myself: 'This dumbass is going to fall asleep on the wheel and will be stupid enough to die and you know who would be the victim here? Me. Because I would get stuck with another roommate who would probably be a dick.'" Florian said, entertaining them with his humour. "Believe me, it was a favour to me."

"Hey!" Mike complained, yet he was laughing too.

Eleven kept on giggling, minus the insanity factor. "Thank you for coming with him and looking out for him. You are a good friend."

It wasn't a lie. El found herself quickly feeling affection towards the boy who, joking or not, sacrificed his sleeping hours and took care of Mike, making sure he'd come home safe. Yeah, she liked Florian because he was a good friend... that and because he didn't have breasts.

Flo waved a hand, like it wasn't a big deal. "Nah, that's okay. He is a freaking nerd but he is also my friend."

"Dude!" Mike smack him on the shoulder and Florian smacked him back, mimicking the 'dude' and El was so happy to see that that was the beginning of a friendship that was going to last. She was happy for Mike because even when he was away from home, he wasn't alone.

After a bit Mike lean to El again, caressing his fingers against her

cheek and kissing her head.

"Baby" Mike called and she smiled. "Since Flo came all the way here I'm going to take him to the bus station so he could get back to Indianapolis. I'll wait with him until he leaves but I'll be back in thirty minutes, okay?"

She kiss him sweetly, El loved the way he said that pet-name, plus it was sweet of him to find a way to call her something when they were in front of people who thought her name was Jane. Yes, it was but not with Mike, she liked being El with him, or baby. "Yes, absolutely." She agreed, it was the least they could do. "Oh, you live in Indianapolis?" El said, turning her attention to Florian.

The boy nodded. "Yeah, what are the odds, right? My parents think I'll be home on Sunday so they'll be surprise too. That or I'll find them screwing in the kitchen and I'll get scarred for life." he shivered and Mike and Eleven laughed. "Anyway, I'll get some sleep on the bus and, well, this is a little embarrassing Jane but, you mind if I use the toilet? Your dumbass boyfriend wouldn't stop since noon and I'm gonna pee any minute now."

"Mike, where are your manners?" the girl turned to smack her boyfriend and nag him.

"I'm sorry, I could wait to get here." he laughed in response.

Eleven rolled her eyes but smiled and apologized to Flo in behalf of him. "I'm sorry and yes, please, go. It's that door next to measles sign."

Florian smiled and hit Mike playfully in the head when he was passing by. "See, douche bag, that's how you do it."

All three of them laughed hard and Mike turned to hold Eleven in his arms but she pitched him, or at least tried given that his coat was thick.

"You couldn't stop since noon for your friend to pee? That's sick, honey."

He laughed again and wrapped his arms around hers and pouted, not

feeling remorseful at all. "What can I say, El? I'm lovesick, besides I missed you." He whispered and finally kissed her lips. "And I love you."

Well, she couldn't say anything after *that*. Eleven wrapped her arms around his neck again and surrender to his kisses, pulling Mike closer. She understood, she felt sick as well and her body was going to burst into flames if the didn't take her medicine soon, the medicine only Mike could give her.

"I love you too, Mike. You have no idea how much I missed you." El said so softly, smiling at him and placing their foreheads together. Their eye lashes fluttering against the other and she gave him an innocent little smile against the not so innocent remark she said next. "I hope you are not so tired that you can't do...stuff."

Eleven's tone at the end made Mike's body's temperature rise up to a thousand degrees and the only one who could lower his fever was the girl in his arms. "Oh, baby, I promise you are going to beg me to fall sleep, because I'm gonna keep you up... all... night." he said between kisses.

El giggled and went for his lips once more.

"I'm sorry for interrupting the lovebirds but we better get going, Mikey." called Florian, patting their backs.

They sighed but didn't get mad.

"Thanks again for looking out for my boyfriend. It was a pleasure to meet you."

The boy smiled. "Pleasure to meet you too, Jane."

Mike smiled and lifted Eleven's chin and placed a chaste kiss on her lips. "I'll be right back, love."

Both Mike and Flo turned to the door, the blonde boy waving to the girl his roommate always talked about, when they bumped into another boy coming to the store.

"Will!" greeted Mike to his childhood friend, sharing a brief hug.

"Mike, what a surprise! She said you were coming on Sunday." said the Byers boy, who came back from New York the night before. "I was on my way to pick up my brother at the bus station and also Dustin who boarded the plane in Boston and met Jonathan in Indianapolis."

Mike was happy to see his friend again too and turned to look at El, both happy that the party was finally going to reunite. They all missed each other.

"Here, Will." Eleven gave the Capri's keys to Will since his car was at the maintenance shop. "Take the car home, Will. I'll stay with Mike and... I don't think I'll be home today at all."

El's double meaning about the obvious activities that'd get her and her boyfriend busy until late made Mike flush pink and also cause them all to snicker.

"Thanks!" said Will and looked at Mike. "Now I know why she bought a new bed for the house and kept the other bed in the cabin."

"Will!" it was now Eleven's turn to blush and the rest of the boys laughed openly until someone nudged Mike.

"What the..." he looked at his friend and found Florian giving him a meaningful look. "Oh yeah, Florian this is my friend Will Byers. She and Will are now living together, their parents are going to get marry next week." he explained. "Will, this is my roommate and friend Florian Legänderr, we were on our way to the bus station too, he lives in Indianapolis."

Will, who noticed the blonde guy, only after being properly introduced allowed himself to smile at him and they shook hands, and Mike and El swore they saw *something* between Will's and Florian's green eyes.

"Uhm, since I'm going there too, I can give you a ride." offered Will and immediately realized how that must have sound.

But Florian smiled. "Yes! Just let me get my bags from Mikey's car, okay?" he said, surprising everyone there, even Mike who hadn't

realised until then that Flo was...

Mike and Eleven stood there, mouth hanging open. Florian took his bags from Mike's backseat and with a last wave to both of them and the promise that he'll visit for Christmas and New Year; his roommate at MIT and his friend from kinder garden got inside the Capri, laughing and talking like if they knew each other since always.

"El, do you think..." asked Mike to his girlfriend next to him.

"... That Santa sent Will a boyfriend this year? *Yep.*"

Both teenagers looked at each other and started laughing happily. Maybe that was the way it was supposed to be, maybe it was fate that his friend he met over 800 miles away from home, actually lived only on a forty minutes drive away from there. Maybe it was fate that he met the classic jog who secretly loved science and bonded with Mike immediately, so that he'd drive with him back to Hawkins and meet Will and, maybe – since Will and El were about to become brother and sister and Mike technically would become a brother in law for him –; Florian was about to become part of that big family as well.

But for the time being, he decided to let things flow while Eleven wrapped her arms around him and buried her face in his chest, breathing him in.

"I love you." she simply said.

And Mike smiled again, what else could he do? His arms closed around her body and kissed the top of her head and those soft curls he loved to play with. "I love you."

The rest of her day went by with ease in the drugstore for El.

Mike told her he had bought her flowers on their way home but she said the flowers could wait. They sat behind the shop counter and El improvised a pillow with a bunch of bandages and ordered Mike to sleep on it and even when he insisted that he was fine, as soon as he rest his head on it, he immediately fell asleep. Eleven smiled at him at stroke his hair like she had wanted to do for so long.

Because she missed him more than she could explain.

She didn't just missed the way he kissed her and how he could turn her brain into jelly with his lips. She didn't just missed the gentle touch of his fingers when he run them on her back after sex. She didn't just missed the way he turns her insides into fire and the pleasure he gave to her every single day when they made love. She didn't just missed the way he could get her to moan his name like she did that entire night, filling the cabin with heavy breathing, touches, steam, passion and screaming when they got to climax. She didn't just missed the way he looked when he fell asleep on her pillow, she didn't just missed that sweet way he had to wake her up, by kissing her neck while cuddling her. She didn't just miss the eggo's he knew how to prepare; she didn't just miss holding his hand.

It wasn't something specific she missed and she noticed that when, at seven when El got off from work and they walked to the ice cream shop she realized she left her coat in the Capri and then, when she begun feeling cold, Eleven immediately felt warmth when Mike opened his corduroy coat and wrapped her around with it, hugging her tight against his body and she knew that what she missed the most about him was just that: having Mike there, walking beside her.

That night, while they were making love again on their fifth anniversary, Hawkins gave welcome to December's first snowfall.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hi everyone! Well I was going to upload a different chapter but someone requested 'jealous Eleven' and inspiration hit me. And don't worry, I do have my own ideas and I do listen to what you guys request. I'll write what you asked me to sooner or later.

*Anyway I hope you all enjoyed this chapter, and please **leave a comment** because I'll keep uploading **as long as I have feedback**.*

*Also, I want to thank **AliKatt** who keeps giving me advices about punctuation and stuff. She's great!*

IMPORTANT: *In case you haven't heard, **Stranger Things** and **It** had been nominated for Mtv awards and we can all vote so please visit the website and vote for them, especially for **Stranger Things** because Mike and Eleven's kiss at the **Snow Ball** was also nominated for 'Best Kiss' so*

*please, **vote vote vote!** They deserve it!*

Thank you guys for reading and for you support!

Until next time!

7. The Answer

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

oOoOoOoOoOo

*Rated: T. / Romance – Hurt/Comfort – Friendship. / (Eleven & Mike),
Dustin.*

xx

THE ANSWER

May 6th, 1988.

There was all kind of kisses.

From spontaneous and small innocent pecks, like the one Mike gave her for the first time in the cafeteria and the first kiss he gave her on the Snow Ball in 1984 when they started dating, to the passionate kind of kisses they share nowadays that sucked the air out of their lungs and left their lips swollen and red.

On the three and a half years they've been together, Mike and Eleven gave kissing a whole new meaning, like if it was art or some kind of new school subject they loved to practice on. There were times when Eleven compared the way Mike kissed her with the science he loves so much because as soon as they locked their lips together, she could feel the world disappearing underneath her feet and gravity vanishing from all around her, making her float; and when he insinuated his tongue on her lips asking for entrance and as soon as she allowed him in, she could actually see herself travelling far away into the galaxy and watching every single star in the universe.

Their kisses were also like a sport. Since El loves to hold Mike at the entrance of the cabin when he has to leave and they spent a few minutes embracing; she always asked him to time her up and she tried to give him a hundred small kisses in one minute. That was her goal because Dustin promised her that if she managed to kiss Mike a hundred times in a minute, he would buy her a hundred boxes of

eggos. Kissing Mike and getting free eggos, what could be better than that?

Every snuggle, every make-out session she shared with Mike – who else, right? – had a little bit of math too. Every day when she drove back to the cabin and he didn't have to work, they studied and did their homework almost like if they were on a race because they only had until six – sometimes eight – until Hopper would be back from work and the new rule was no kissing *while* he is around. At least that was better than no kissing at all, (yeah sure). So after doing whatever homework they had and timing themselves, working as fast as they could to get as much time as possible, as soon as homework was over, El would fling every single book in between them and throw herself at Mike, to kiss him senseless until her dad gets back.

Their kisses were also like music too. Because it was after the song Mike gave to her when she turned fourteen years old, that they started adding a little more tongue to their kisses and also, because he always seemed to find those moments particularly inspiring given that if there was a song Mike loved, he always leaned to kiss her deep and when they had to catch their breaths he started humming and singing on her lips, leaving a trail of kisses from her mouth to her neck. Those musical kisses were her favourites because, even when she loves hearing Mike singing, he almost never did it, there was still a lot of the shy kid she met almost five years ago.

Maybe that was the reason, the shyness, that had started the fire growing inside her body because, even after being dating for three years and four months, kissing was the *only* thing they've done until now.

It was great, she wasn't complaining about their innocent and not-so-innocent kisses and ways Mike has to kiss her, not at all. Eleven loves the way in which Mike could turn her brain into jelly with his lips because – probably because that's the only thing they've done so far – he always puts such devotion on those passionate and delicious encounters that El was sure he invented a whole new language with his lips. He knew how to recognize every single one of the noises she did when he kissed her good – and better – and he knew exactly how to respond when she closed her arms around him tighter than before while she moaned in his mouth. He became an expert, he became a

wizard who jinxed her with his infinite charm and, even they were both 16 years old, none of them have ever gotten to second base, at least not yet.

It wasn't like if Eleven thinks she is ready to go all the way but, in that moment while Mike was pinned against the wall and El was kissing him like if the word was about to end, squeezing each other in a hug with her hands messing with his hair and his hands playing with the waist of her jeans wondering whether to go south or stay there on the frontier; the teenage girl felt that fire burning her insides and wanting more.

"Mike..." she gasped when they had to pull apart and catch their breaths, yet her body was still pressing up against his and, when her boyfriend kissed her jaw and went down to bite her neck, Eleven forgot any decency and where she was and took Mike hands on her waist and, unceremoniously placed them on her butt, then she kissed him again.

Mike got, *duh*, the message and gave her a squeeze when she insinuated her tongue between his lips and they locked again, holding him with her arms around his neck and hugging tighter, not even caring that they were actually in public.

Eleven knew what she needed, she wasn't stupid and she knew what such fire wanted because she was sure that it was only one way to deal with the heat inside of her: Sex.

They talked about it last summer when they found Nancy's picture in her room, when they talked about their fears and understood that they had to be mentally ready to give such important step in their relationship. Hopper himself had given her 'the talk' a few days after Christmas when he accidentally overheard Max and his daughter talking about a home pregnancy test her friend took that freaked Lucas out, when he realized that if Max was having sex then he should stop playing fool and give his daughter – who just started living like a normal kid – the dreadful talk about sexual intercourse. Eleven treasured that memory. Not because it was pleasant, in fact it was indescribable awkward but watching her dad turning all those shades of red every time he had to explain how everything worked and the way that Joyce – who was supposed to help him and, instead,

she laughed her ass off – was still making fun of him; made Eleven name such day as 'Pink Hopper Day'.

That time El and Mike – who was currently squeezing her butt in a way that turned her fire into a volcano –, had talked about their fears, about being ready, she even found out that Mike felt like if he wasn't worthy of being with her and that he was afraid she might find someone better than him. That was ridiculous! There was no one in this entire world and all its dimensions that was better than Mike for her, how could it be? No one could erase every thought in her brain with a kiss like he does; no one could create electricity with bare hands like he does every time they walked hand in hand. No one could make magic happens and pull El under a spell like he does every time he run his fingers in her curls, and with no one else Eleven wanted to lose her virginity and make love with.

She didn't know if they were close to that moment or not, being that the kissing and the occasionally butt-grabbing were the only things they had done so far, but maybe they could try a little more stuff. Not running into that deep forest that was having sex but, maybe, they could start peeking behind the bushes just a little bit.

It wasn't enough kissing him all the time anymore; it wasn't enough having their Friday's dates at the Ice cream shop and make out in the parking lot. Of course she loves all of that but Eleven wanted *more*. More from him, more from Mike and she kind of knew he felt the same but she also knew that he wasn't going to say it first. Yet, Eleven wanted to... *touch him*.

Okay, she was technically touching him. Having Mike against the school wall where everyone could see them next to the main entrance and waiting for Karen to pick him up and feeling something pressing against her hip that she *knew* wasn't Mike's car keys while they were impossibly hugged; that counts as 'touching'... but no. What she wanted was more, she wanted to touch everything and while they were there kissing desperately and the fire inside of her was consuming her entirely, Eleven decided that that was it and she was going to talk to him about it.

Well, not now but on Sunday when he gets back.

"I don't wanna go." whispered Mike when they had to catch their breaths again, even so he spoke with his lips still glued on hers, like when he sings.

Eleven giggled. "I don't want you to go either, but you have to. It's only two days, honey."

"Mm..." Mike nodded and gave her small kisses on the corners of her mouth before talking. "Will you miss me?"

"Of course I will."

Pff, what a dumb question, of course she will. She already missed him even when she still had him pressed against the brick wall with her hands around his neck and his hands now back on her waist, caressing her skin with his thumbs. She already missed him even when five seconds ago she had his tongue in her throat, devouring each other. Yes, she missed him because she knew they were going to miss their date and she wasn't going to see him until Sunday noon but, she also knew that he needed to make that trip. Because Mike was on his way to have his interview on MIT, his college interview and El knew that it was, probably, the most important interview of his entire life.

"Are you nervous?"

She asked and Mike nodded, kissed her forehead and rested his head against the wall, catching his breath after kissing each other that much and El held him closer – if that was even possible –. The way in which Mike bit his lip was a clear sign that he was, in fact, a lot more nervous than she thought at first.

"I feel like if I'm going to throw myself in a parachute." he explained, one of his hands left her waist and he placed it above his head, emphasizing what he meant. "Like this is me, ready to throw myself onto the future, thinking that I'm good enough to show up at the college I dreamt about my whole life and I'll jump but the parachute will fail and I'm going to crash because they'd tell me I'm not smart enough."

The tone in which he spoke didn't pleased El at all.

"You are not going to crash, Mike. I don't know anyone smarter and better prepared than you."

Okay, it wasn't like she knew a lot of people but still. He sighed.

"You say that because you like me."

Eleven shook her head. "First of all I love you and second, I say it because it's the truth. Remember, friends don't lie and girlfriends doesn't either." she whispered and kissed him. "Have faith, Mike. You have been preparing for this moment since always. We've gone through a lot of responses and practiced a lot. You go there and tomorrow when you have the interview, fight like only you can for your future."

Her words seemed to work because he looked into her eyes and smiled at her with the same dreamy smile that stole her soul and made her squeal like a three-year old.

"*Our* future, El." he answered and leaned to press his forehead against his girlfriend's, taking a deep breath and feeling relaxed. "Everything I'd do, everything I'd work hard for, will be to build the life I want to share with you. I want to show you the world, to make you happy." he said softly, kissing the tip of her nose. "I love you."

She was already happy and Eleven felt warmth that wasn't sexual, but deeper and more intense, spreading through her limbs to the tip of her fingers, her toes and every hair on her head. There was no way that she could stop loving him, she would never resist not having him and, even when she knew Massachusetts was far but he'd be back on Sunday, it was at that moment that reality hit hard on her. Because if Mike's gets admitted on MIT – and she really hopes he gets it – it meant she would have to wait months without seeing him.

"What is it, El?" he asked, his arms holding her tight.

El doubted if she should say it or not but, knowing Mike the way she did, she knew he wouldn't let it go until she speaks.

"I was thinking again about all the time we'll spent apart from each other when you move to Massachusetts." she confessed, playing with

the zipper on his hoodie, fixing her eyes on it. "I'm gonna miss you. It won't be like that summer when you had to go for four days to visit your grandparents, this time it'll be months. I do want you to get admitted on college and graduate and all but... It'll be so damn hard being away from you, Mike."

Mike listened to his girlfriend carefully, letting her release everything she felt. They had talked about their relationship when he'd have to leave for college and he remembers vividly the pain on those big beautiful eyes he loves when he explained how far MIT was from home, and that they would only see each other with months apart on Winter and Summer's break. That day she cried a lot, he cried too but they didn't fight; they cried because they exposed and faced the bitter truth that would be being apart from each other again for so long. Still they were determined to fight for it and never give up. Never give each other up.

"Hey..." Mike said, holding her chin up and lifting her face to him so she could see him and pay attention to what he wanted to say. "We talked about this, remember?"

She nodded; she wasn't trying to make him feel guilty or anything. "Yes, and I'm not playing against you, it's just..." she sighed "Never mind, I'm being stupid."

Mike smiled and leaned to El's lips and kissed her again, except that this time it wasn't passionately but it was just as lovingly. His kisses were soft touches, his lips caressing hers sweetly, innocently and Eleven marvelled on how he could wash any concern she has with such delicate kisses. She kissed him back enjoying his silky full lips, pecking like when they started dating.

When she opened her eyes again, Mike's chocolate eyes possessed her entirely. "You are not being stupid, baby, but don't worry. We still have time and then, I don't know, we will come up with something." he whispered and smiled with that damn beautiful smile of his that said *'everything will be okay'*. "I'll do everything I can so you can always be sure that you are in my heart. I promise." he kissed her again. "I love you, El."

And just like that Eleven felt better and took a deep breath, smiling at

her boyfriend. If Mike promised then that's all she needed.

"I love you, Mike."

Yes, they love each other, no doubt about that and Mike leaned so he could claim her lips once again when the familiar voice of one of his friends made them jump, yelling and standing right beside them.

"For the love of God, Mike. How much longer until your mom picks you up? I need your girlfriend." Dustin complained, leaning against the wall. The young couple just snickered.

"I'm sorry, Dustin." Eleven apologized but Mike pushed him.

"Dude, get lost! We won't see each other until Sunday; let me kiss my girlfriend in peace." Mike complained but he was smiling despite himself.

Lucky for Dustin when Eleven tiptoed so she could kiss her boyfriend again, a car parked nearby and honked by the time someone called for them.

"Hello, kids!" Karen Wheeler greeted, waving an arm to all three teenagers at the school entrance.

Dustin's smile was monumental, stretching his arms in the air and thanking God for Karen Wheeler. Mike and Eleven sighed and shared a smile even when they knew they were going to miss each other. All three of them – yeah, Dustin too – walked towards the car and after some hellos with the woman, Mike leaned against the car and put his hand in his pocket, taking out the keys of his Capri parked nearby.

"Take care of it for me, baby, okay?" asked Mike, giving his girlfriend his car keys and then, he took off his hoodie placing it on Eleven's shoulders.

She already drove Mike's car so it wasn't unusual but she felt really happy when Mike gave her the blue hoodie she loved so much. "For me?"

The boy giggled. "Oh no, it's just until I get back." he said, poking her nose playfully and then leaning to kiss her before getting into the car.

"I can't believe you are on the way to have your college interview, sweetie. Your grandpa is so proud of you for applying on MIT. You'll meet so many people, new people." Karen said excitedly while her son was putting the seatbelt on and Eleven was leaning through the window.

Mike just smiled and then cupped his girlfriend's cheek, who was smiling at him excitedly.

"I'll miss you." she whispered.

"I'll miss you too, love. I'll call you as soon as I arrive to my grandparent's house, okay?" Mike promised. He was going to Indianapolis to board a plane to Massachusetts where Karen's parents also lived, only fifteen minutes away from MIT. His grandfather studied there and like his mom said, he was so proud that Mike wanted to go there too.

Eleven hugged Mike again, half her body inside the car through the window and they kissed again, not caring that his mother was literally beside them. Mike kissed her back fiercely, memorizing her warmth, her taste and the softness of her lips, – like if he hadn't memorize it by now – and taking her lips on his. Karen, on the other hand, looked away where Dustin was standing and she blushed. Although she wasn't surprised, she was already very used to the fact that her son and his girlfriend kissed everywhere.

"Oh, for God's sake! Your mother is literally next to you, you horny piece of shit!" Dustin complained, clapping his hand loudly and forcing the lovebirds to pull apart. Karen thanked him.

Mike and El rolled their eyes but smiled anyway.

"I love you." whispered Mike and caressed Eleven's bottom lip with his thumb, that perfect pink lip. "I'll see you on Sunday."

She found herself happily trapped under his charms and kissed his thumb, smiling. "I love you too, Mike. Now... go get'em, tiger."

They laughed again but, when Dustin honked at them and begged Karen to drive away, Eleven let Mike go and waved at him, throwing

kisses in the air. When the car got lost from her sight, she hugged Mike's hoodie and breathed his scent on it, feeling a million times more in love until Dustin stood beside her, placing his arm on her shoulders.

"Ah, young people in love..." he said holding his friend and batting his eyes playfully.

Eleven smiled and rested her head on his shoulder and kept on watching the road where the car disappeared. She sighed. "I miss him already."

Dustin rolled his eyes and joked, pointing a finger to Eleven's mouth. "Well, I guess that after eating Mike for like half hour, you still have him trapped inside your mouth. Hello buddy, are you there?"

The girl moved her head backwards but still laughed at Dustin's wisecracks and they started walking back to school, wrapping her arm around him and holding Mike's hoodie with her right hand. She never thought it was wrong to hold Dustin like that, even when she knew it might seem weird being that she kissed her boyfriend a lot just a few minutes ago and now she had her arm around another guy, but for her it was normal. Everyone in the party were her friends, – Mike too, aside from being her boyfriend – and to Eleven, Dustin was special too. Not like Mike, of course, but he was also her favourite.

"I'm sorry for keeping you waiting, Dusty." she apologized, calling him by the nickname she heard his mother calling him too.

Dustin shook his head. "That's okay, El. Besides we can stay until we're done. There'll be people working around school too; they are preparing the decorations for prom."

El nodded. "Oh, I got all the cards we needed, by the way."

"Great!"

Since their sophomore year, Dustin and Eleven – along with other people – had been in charge of the yearbook. They were in charge of the pictures, the distribution and recollection of the cards with the question the seniors would answer that would be written next to their

picture in the yearbook, so they could always read all the nonsense they said when they were teenagers. They were in charge of the edition for the entire yearbook, the order in which everything went, the pictures from the science fair, theatre class, chorus, school band, everything. That day, being that the rest of the students that worked with them had finished their activities, Dustin and El were alone to finish their share. Eleven had recollected the cards from the seniors and she and Dustin had to write their answers next to their pictures and then send it to the print shop and get them bind.

When they arrived to the yearbook room, Eleven started organizing the cards in alphabetic order, like they did with the pictures while Dustin was finishing editing the pictures from the last basketball match. They usually spent time talking about the party, or Mike's new D&D campaign – actually it was always Dustin trying to get information from El, but she always said that she didn't know even when Mike wrote it beside her –. Lately Dustin had also been sharing his concerns about not knowing which college to apply.

But that day, even when he spoke a couple of times, Eleven had barely answered to him and after a while, Dustin turned to check on her and found her staring at nothing.

"You okay, buddy?" asked the boy, pulling her out of her thoughts.

She blinked a couple of times and turned her attention back to the cards, giving them to him.

"Yeah, sure." she said and sat next to him while they worked.

Dustin choose to believe her, assuming that she was thinking about her boyfriend and daydreaming about him when he comes back in two days. Eleven, on the other hand, was worried out of mind.

Even when she heard Karen saying something that was just innocent, it wasn't until then when what she said settled down that Eleven started freaking out.

'You'll meet so many people, new people.'

Yeah, Eleven knew that Mike would meet a lot of people when he

gets into college. She knew he'll make new friends, she knew he'll meet people that one day, might work with him but... what if Mike meets *someone else*? It wasn't like if she had doubts of him or didn't trust him, she wasn't a jealous person – in her opinion, it was only natural to hate every single girl that talked to Mike, even if it was only to borrow his notes from social studies –; but what if Mike, being away from her for so long, meets someone else?

What if she wasn't the love of his life after all?

Because Eleven *knows*, she knows in her guts, she knows in her lips, she knows it as an absolute fact that Mike *is* the love of her life. There would never be any other guy for her and it wasn't because, without Mike she would have never had the life she has now; but because Mike simply means everything to Eleven. Mike is the main reason why the world was created, the most wonderful smile, the right words in the right time whenever she needed it. The one that filled her, the wings on her back, the air underneath them, the breath in her lungs, the soil she walked on, the boy she is madly in love with.

Eleven would never move on if Mike, being away from her in another state and surrounded by other girls, finds a new girl. Eleven would never wash her feelings away, she would never remove the love and the memories she shares with him because it would be easier to remove the bones out of her body without any pain than stop loving him. Because not having Mike means the end of life.

"El..." called Dustin and snapped his fingers in front of her so she would wake up and look at him.

And when she blinked, two tears fell from her eyes and made Dustin worry about her, not believing even is she said she was okay so they could finish editing.

"Hey, what's up?" he asked softly, fully focused on his friend and holding her shoulder, making sure she'd stay right there. "It's because you miss Mike?"

Eleven looked at her friend and how worried he was. In many ways, Dustin and Mike were very much alike. Obviously her feelings for her

boyfriend went far beyond and were a million times more intense, but the glow, the warmth, the patience they have with her was the same. Both Mike and Dustin had learned to read her better than anyone and denying the truth to Dustin, was like denying the truth to Mike as well.

Suddenly Eleven knew she had to speak up; she needed to open up and face her greatest fear if she didn't wanted to be consumed by it.

"Dusty, I need your opinion about something." she whispered, looking at her hands on her lap, incapable of fixing her eyes on Dustin's blue ones. "But first I need you to promise me you'll never tell anyone about this, not even the party and, especially, not even Mike."

Dustin knew it was serious because, as far as he knows, she didn't keep any secret from Mike. Yet she seemed to need him to.

"Of course, El, I promise." he answered and gave her shoulder a tiny squeeze, encouraging her to speak.

The girl took a deep, long breath before looking at him and started talking. "Do you think, and please be honest..." she begged, touching her heart "Dustin, do you think Mike will fall in love with somebody else when he leaves to college?"

Dustin, who thought was going to find out she was pregnant with triplets, found himself shocked about Eleven's question.

"...What?"

El stood up from her chair and went to grab her backpack, taking a Kleenex to blow her nose and kept walking around the small room, while hugging herself, while hugging Mike's hoodie and his scent on her. She sighed before speaking.

"Don't misunderstand me, Dusty. It's not that I doubt of him it's just that..." she wiped her tears, suddenly pouring out from her eyes. "You heard what Karen said before, right? About Mike meeting new people."

Dustin nodded, yet he stayed still in his chair. Eleven continued.

"I trust him, I trust him blindly and I know he loves me just as much as I love him." she said, trying to make her point clear that this wasn't lack of trust or commitment with the relationship she has since she came back. "But, if Mike gets admitted on MIT and... God! I really, *really* want him to get it because it's his dream, because he worked so damn hard for it..." she sighed staring at the roof, asking for her boyfriend's dream to come true. "If Mike gets on MIT, we'll be far away for months, like literally months and..."

"El, wait." asked Dustin, stopping his friend mid-sentence. He couldn't believe what she was suggesting. "Do you think Mike would cheat on you?"

The tone on Dustin's question was like if she had insulted him. Eleven looked at him with wide eyes and shook her head, getting closer to him.

"Oh no, not at all." she assured him and kept talking. "It's just that... Dusty, look at me. I've lived my entire life trapped in a lab, barely educated. For me to study here with you guys I had to take infinite classes from you, Mike, Steve and Hopper and even then I could barely pass the admission test. All I know about life and the world are the stuff you guys showed me but that's it. My world is only this big." she explained, taking an apple out of her bag to emphasize what she said.

Dustin remained silent, El kept on talking.

"But it's *my* world and I love it, I love everything you all taught me, but I know there are a million girls who knows a lot more stuff than I do. Girls with many experiences, girls who had seen so many places, girls with so many skills and my powers don't count. Girls who had won medals and prizes, girls who..." she moved her hands along her body, drawing the invisible figure of a feminine body with more curves. "You know what I mean. Girls that will attend to the same college as Mike who would be undeniable smart and that would be able to talk to him about advanced science, and comic books and stuff like you and the boys do. Girls who will understand anything he says without needing him to stop and explain all that stuff." she blew her nose again. "Girls who have more to offer."

"Do you think Mike will dump you for somebody else?" asked Dustin in disbelief.

Eleven shook her head slowly, biting her nails and looking at her feet. "No, he is just too nice to do that. He is so sweet, so impossibly considerate, and so tender, so caring. So respectful and polite that..." *we haven't had sex yet*, she was tempted to confess. "That he never pushed any limit with me. And I fear that, if Mike ever finds someone who can give him things that I can't, someone who can make him happy, then he wouldn't chase that happiness because I'm here holding him back."

Dustin couldn't believe his ears, his mouth was literally hanging open and Eleven shivered before asking the most difficult question she asked in her entire life.

"Do you think that, when Mike leaves to college and in order to let him be free to have a life, I should b-break up with h-him?" El stuttered and then she simply broke down and cried.

By the time Eleven asked him that, Dustin was wondering if the gate opened again and if they were all inside the upside down because none of the things Eleven said had any sense. How could all of that be true? How could she even think such things? Even when in his nature Dustin stood up and wrapped his arms around her and hugged her carefully, letting her cry away, he couldn't help to snicker while she was crying in his chest.

"You're so stupid, El." said Dustin with a grin, but he still caressed her head.

Eleven lifted her head up and stared at him, her eyes were rimmed-red with the fears she had been holding back probably since Mike explained her how far MIT was from home.

"W-what?"

"You heard me. You're really stupid." said Dustin again but he was fully smiling at her, holding her by the shoulders and looking fully into her eyes. "I can't believe you're even thinking that Mike could actually believe that there's someone better than you for him. Better

than him yeah, sure but..."

"No." she hissed, frowning a lot. "No one is better than Mike, not to me."

Dustin gestured with his hand like if saying *'that's exactly my point'* and his smile grew wider. "See? How can you possibly believe you are not the only one for Mike? Don't you know him at all? Don't you ever talk to him? Or maybe you are blind that you can't see that dumbass amount of love in his eyes?" asked the boy and he took another Kleenex, wiping her tears. "You are the answer, his other half. Jeez, El, I can't believe I have to say these things to you."

The boy leaned backwards on a desk and patted a space next to him. Eleven went to sit, looking at him but her crying was ceasing.

"Can I tell you something and you swear to me you'll never say anything to Mike? Same way I promised I wouldn't say anything you just told me?" asked Dustin, giving El his pinkie finger. "Promise?"

Eleven stared at Dustin's finger but he explained what a pinkie-swear was and they made it. A secret that would be theirs.

"Promise." whispered Eleven.

Dustin took a deep breath and fixed his eyes on hers for a minute before speaking.

"Three hundred and fifty three days." whispered Dustin, staring at the wall. "Mike called you every night for three hundred and fifty three days, right?"

Eleven smiled, reminiscing the beginning of their love and, sadly, the bitterness of the torture that it was being away from each other and seeing him getting broken every day while was trying to find her, hoping against hope. She nodded; she knew the party was aware of the calls because they were there when she and her boyfriend reunited in Will's house.

"Yes, and I heard him every day." she answered softly, leaning against his shoulder but, when Dustin spoke again, she immediately lift her head to look at him, dumbfounded.

"Me too."

Eleven was shocked.

"I heard him too." confessed Dustin, seriously. "El, you know Mike better than anyone right now. You are his girlfriend and his best friend. Shit, you are the love of his life even when now, for whatever reason, you are thinking that he would want someone else... as if that could ever be possible." he snorted. "But, you don't know how Mike was before meeting you."

Eleven was confused. "I met him before disappearing, during that week..."

"No, you don't understand." Dustin interrupted her. "You don't know how Mike was before meeting you, and don't mean the obvious that no one can know one person before meeting each other. I mean that you changed Mike that night when we found you under the rain while looking for Will."

Eleven remained lost. "I still don't understand, Dusty."

He took another deep breath and looked at her. "Look, El, I love Mike. He is one of my best friends; he is a great guy, blah blah... But he wasn't always like you know him, understand? I mean, he always been a nice kid, he always been bold and always cared about all of us, he always offered his help whenever we needed. Damn, that's why he is our Paladin; but it's also true that he had his things we didn't like about him but we tolerated those flaws because no one is perfect."

Eleven opened her mouth but Dustin placed a finger on her lips and shook his head, stopping her before she'd say anything. She didn't know if he stopped her from saying that Mike is indeed perfect or if he just wanted to keep talking without interruptions. She kept listening.

"You've seen Mike and Lucas crashing into one another once in a while, right? Their personalities are very alike and they both have that leader thing going on, even when Mike is actually the leader of the party in my opinion. Anyway, that 'once in a while' used to be all

the time. He wasn't very flexible either and he almost didn't have any patience." He snickered, which made clear that he didn't mean to be rude. "And I'm not denying he is a good guy and he's always been because, beyond all of that, all three of us used to ignore the negative side of him because he was, at the same time, the friend we could always count on; the first hand that would offer to lift us up whenever we'd fall. That natural altruism was the reason for us to be out there in the forest that rainy night."

The girl listened carefully. She had nothing to add other than smile at the memory of the boy she had never seen before that took off his jacket, placed it on her shoulders and took her hand and drove her to his house, protecting her from the rain and saving her life.

"That night when he took you in, saying that he did because he didn't want his mother to find out we've been outside, Lucas and I realized that that wasn't the real reason why he took you there. It wasn't anything sexual, it wasn't because he wanted to possess you or anything; it just... Something happened to Mike from the moment you looked at each other in the eye." he lifted his hands in the air and smacked them together. "Fate, force, powers, magnetism? Who knows, but that week you spent with us, we met a whole new Mike. It went beyond the fact that you are the first and only girl he ever liked but then, when you disappeared..."

Dustin shook his head, staring at his feet and then fixing his eyes on hers.

"When you disappeared, El, I don't have enough words to explain this but I actually *saw* Mike's heart breaking into a million pieces." he whispered so softly that she could barely hear him. But she did and she wanted to cry again.

"It's still very hard for us to think about that time." El said and Dustin held her against his side.

"I know." He stopped for a second and then continued. "At first we knew he was cranky because you were gone, because we knew he liked you and also because he refused to believe what, to Lucas and me was a fact: that you died." he said, frowning. He didn't like to reminisce that either. "But later, while Lucas kept complaining about

Mike's attitude, while they fought every single day, while he started having problems at school and rebelling against his parents which had never happened before... Jeez, even Will lost his grip with him a couple of times; I noticed that that was no longer just grief. That wasn't the Mike before you, that wasn't Mike... at all—

— Just think about the way he used to treat Max, he would have never behave like that." Dustin explained, trying to be as accurate as he could. "But around January, two months after you went missing, he started to have this rage, this never-ending shitty mood, until one day Lucas and Will came to me and they told me they had enough of him, so I decided to call Mike on the supercomm later that night to let him know what the guys told me when..."

Eleven was frozen. "You heard him talking to me."

Dustin looked at her in the eye for what seemed like an eternity with the saddest look in his eyes. It was hard for him to remember all of that, no doubt. He nodded.

"If was then that everything, *everything* made sense." he explained. "You know, Lucas mocked him a couple times that week about him having a crush on you, I did too, but it wasn't until that night that I found out, maybe even before Mike himself, that he had fallen *in love* with you." said Dustin, poking El on the nose. "And if my friend Mike was in fact in love with a girl that would never return and yet he kept on calling and looking for her every single day. If my friend Mike was holding on his hope and fighting against that pain, if my friend Mike was so desperate that he talked to the statics on his supercomm, if my friend Mike was hallucinating he heard your voice on the white noise; then it was time for the guys and I to take a deep breath, swallow our pride and pick up the pieces of our best friend for as long as it takes for him to start healing. Because even with his special personality, Mike always been there for us when it actually mattered."

When Dustin finished, Eleven was crying again.

"Anyway, El." he cleared his throat when realized he had a lump. "What I mean with all of this is that, even with all those little and not so little things he had against him, we could always trust that, at the

end of the day, he would be the friend we liked. And then, when you came back, when you were finally by his side, that patience and devoted Mike you met that week has now grown a million times stronger. Today, that half of him that made him our friend even when he had a shitty mood is now all of him. Now that half of the nice Mike is the entire Mike."

Dustin smiled when he said that last part and she smiled too, hugging him.

"Do you think that you'll do Mike a favour if, adding to the fact that he'll be really far out there in college, you also break up with him? Do you actually believe that breaking his heart would end up being 'the best for him'?" he moved his fingers like quotation marks, clearly finding ridiculous her previous question. "El, Mike knows no reality if you are not in it. He knows no present and is unable to face any future if you are not a part of it. You are the answer he was looking for for three hundred and fifty three days. You are all of his positive sides." he wiped her tears with his thumbs. "El, you and Mike were made for each other, you are his perfect match. Don't ever doubt about that."

Eleven, who was starting to run out of tissues, wiped her tears again and blew her nose before hugging Dustin tight and sighing, feeling a lot better. Her friend's words brought her peace and washed away that nightmare she had gotten herself into and she could see how stupid were her fears, created no doubt by her own insecurities. The evidence of what Dustin said was there in front of her, under her nose on the love that Mike, her boyfriend, gave her every single day.

"Thank you, Dusty." whispered El and she tiptoed to kiss her friend on the cheek. The boy laughed.

"You're welcome, buddy."

They went back to their yearbook activities, she read the cards and Dustin wrote the answers on the computer.

Normally in other schools, the students have to answer simple questions, like where do they see themselves in ten years, or what do they expect from the future. Hawkins school council, nevertheless,

considered that it's seniors should answer a different and elaborate question every year, trying to make them think about a deep, intrinsic scenario.

"Ugh, who thought it was a good idea to ask a bunch of 17 year-olds what would they remember the most about their high school years if they leave the county to fight in a war?" asked Eleven to Dustin, while they were reading the cards and also, to let the conversation they had in the past.

Dustin laughed. "I guess that's what we get when we live in a small town filled with people who try a little too hard at being different and unique."

The girl laughed too, again Dusty was right.

"Next year at our senior year, do you think we'll have to answer something as dumb as this?" asked El.

The boy, who had forgot about it until then, leaned to his backpack and then smile at her.

"Actually I have the question for our senior year right here. The principal gave it to me before lunch." he said and gave Eleven the envelope.

She took it and frown at the question, wondering what had the school council been thinking when they came up with it. Still she laughed, reading it out loud, trying to sound very serious.

"Being that sadness and happiness walk hand in hand and using a painful period of your life, do you think you have found real true happiness?" El read the card before looking at Dustin and laughed hard. "Oh my God, we are going to read such stupid answers next year..." said El still smiling.

But Dustin had that smile on his face that screamed he knows something more.

"What?" she asked with a smile. "Oh please tell me there's more."

Dustin nodded. "Mike was with me when the principal gave me the

envelope and..." he took off his jacket and grabbed a piece of paper he had next to his ID. "This is his answer."

Eleven's heart started pounding on her ribcage when her boyfriend's name came back to the conversation and she took the piece of paper Dustin gave her, not before promising she wouldn't say anything.

When she unfolded it, Eleven was convinced that the school council was filled with geniuses, because if a question like that could bring her such happiness then she couldn't wait until the next year's yearbook would be ready and next to Mike's picture, his answer would be immortalized. An answer that was a message for her, only for her.

Blue hand-writing on a piece of paper from his math notebook, Mike had written:

'3 + 5 + 3 = Eleven'

"I told you, El. You are the answer." said Dustin, smiling.

Eleven cried again in his arms except that, this time, her tears came with the biggest smile.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hi everyone! Well, I'm sorry it took so long, I had author's block and you know how it is. The weird part was that this idea was in my head since last year, I don't know why it was so hard... Maybe because I was daydreaming that Fillie might be true and then there's that kid again in the picture... – YEAH I'm acting like a teenager, don't judge me xD – at least I hope we get a lot of Mileven in season 3.

*Well, in the end I finished the chapter and I'm quite proud about it, I hope you guys enjoyed it and, as always, **please leave a comment**. Like I always say, I'll keep uploading **as long as I have feedback**.*

Also, I'll write the new story on the next days – it won't be published here, it'll be a separate story but in the same timeline – so if you want FF to sent you the notification, hit favourite author/follow author and you'll be notified about it. Still, don't worry; I'll be back to this series. I've already started a bunch of new ones.

*I also want to send special Thanks to **DISNEYPRINCESS315** -you are the best!- who helped me A LOT with info about American high school data. If you guys haven't read her stories, then read them, **you'll love them.***

As always, if you have any request, just let me know. I listen to every one of them and I'll do it sooner or later. Also if you want to do some serious fangirling about Mileven or Fillie, you are welcome to inbox-me xD. – I'm such a teen on the inside –.

Until next time!

.

.

See you at prom! ;)

8. Mom

[A/N: Hi cuties, just a request. If you don't plan to review, please don't read. I'm not obligated to write as you aren't obligated to leave a comment but given that I do this to entertain you, then I as many other authors deserve a few words for the story we are giving to you. Have a great day.]

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Rated: K+. / Romance - Family. / (Eleven & Mike), OC.

xx

MOM

September 2nd, 2001.

Life is perfect just the way it is.

Eleven was leaning on the threshold between the kitchen and the living room watching her family just talking and relaxing while she dried her hands on the apron.

That Sunday, El spent the whole day cooking and frosting cookies for Luke to share with his classmates on the next day, as it was requested by his future teacher on the PTA meeting a couple days earlier before the first day of school. She thought it was a good idea, besides if Eleven learned something from Mike's mom was that the best way to get to people's hearts was by feeding them. Want people to like you? Throw food at them.

So after cooking a ridiculous amount of cookies with Mike's help, now she was looking at her boys spending time together.

El got lost in the moment and the scene in front of her; looking at Mike sitting on the carpeted floor and reading the list of school supplies while Luke, their four year-old boy, showed his dad he had everything settled for his first day of school. The list wasn't long,

after all Luke was about to start kindergarten but it was extremely cute to see his excitement.

That huge smile just like his father's on that glowing chubby face filled with so many freckles, – even when people said he looked exactly like her since he had her eyes, her button nose, and her hair –, all of him made their parents melt by watching him grow every day a little bit more and their hearts burst into waves and waves of pure love.

Their first son so big but yet so little. Every day more independent but so fragile still; the first miracle their love had created now there ready to explore the world outside the house and ready to make friends on his own.

She sighed again, she knew it would be hard spending the day without Luke chasing after her around the house while doing 'the claw' Mike taught him, or playing hide and seek with him and then finally 'find' him hiding in the same place where he always hides: the towel closet. Yes, it would be really hard missing him but she smiled too because it only meant that her first baby is growing up and also enjoying the freedom and the life she couldn't enjoy when she was his age. Besides, she wouldn't be *totally* alone.

She rubbed her stomach, the tiny bump with the twelve weeks old baby they were expecting in February, their second baby. Along with Mike and Luke, he or she was another reason to smile every day.

Suddenly, as Mike reached for his son to clean the ink stain Luke made on his cheek with a pen and Eleven watched as they played and shared time together, both so cute, so close, the boy looked back at his mom and beamed. Honey eyes connecting with hers, his smile big and wonderful filled with shiny white baby teeth.

"Mommy is spying on us, daddy." Luke whispered pointing at her with his finger. Mike turned to her and smiled. His eyes sparkling, the love in his chocolate orbs overwhelming.

"Aren't we lucky?" he said and then kissed his forehead before standing up. "I'll help mom, son, keep playing."

Eleven knew what Mike meant and went to the kitchen as far as she could so Luke wouldn't hear them and sighed; she took off the apron and put it back in the drawer when she felt her husband's hands wrapping her body and hugging her from behind. She could feel Mike's smile when he rubbed her tummy as he kissed her neck; she *loved* being pregnant for a million reasons and having his hands on her tummy was one those reasons.

"I love you." Mike whispered. She knew he didn't just say it because he felt like it, (well, yes) but also because he was comforting her; because he knew how she felt, how nervous she was, how scared she felt for what they were about to do. He knew it was going to be hard for her.

She smiled and then sighed again.

Mike noticed of course, how couldn't he? He knew her like the back of his hand. "You okay, baby?" he asked in a whisper, his love unconditional.

El doubted whether to say yes or not. She didn't know how she felt, she sighed once more.

"Everything will be okay, baby. It's the right thing to do." Mike assured her and she turned around facing him, wrapping her arms around his neck.

Eleven leaned and pressed their foreheads together enjoying the moment and how he was looking at her. It was almost like when they kissed for the second 'first' time, except there was no music playing.

"I'm nervous, he is so little but, you know..."

He nodded. "I know, El, I know."

The situation in which they were into was one they had been preparing for since the moment Luke was born. Both have been talking all those years about the issue they had ahead so many times they lost count and every time they talked about it the result was different. Sometimes they agreed it was something they should do; sometimes they agreed they would do it only 'if necessary' and then

immediately realized it was going to be. In fact there was a time before Luke was ten months old when they decided they would talk to him when he was old enough but then, one day, Luke simply left them without any choice. It had been so sudden, everything they talked about and planned had been completely erased and their fears and worries came true, making them walk into a territory they weren't ready to explore quite yet.

It had been pretty innocent, really, but it shook them to the bone.

That day was especially hot even for the first days of June and they decided to use the kiddie pool on the back yard. It had been a beautiful Sunday, so bright and warm and it was going to be the first time Luke would be in the water only for fun, – aside from how they played with him when they gave Luke a bath –; so both Mike and El were super excited to see him enjoy a nice afternoon playing with mom and dad in the water at the same time.

That day, as a plate of chocolate biscuits and a jar of cold lemonade (great memories, by the way) were waiting on a table just a few feet away, Mike and El were enjoying every bit of their baby boy as he kept laughing.

She was sitting in the pool with the water to her chest and holding her baby boy trying to keep his tiny hat on while Mike, also sitting next to them, played with some rubber colourful fishes, filling them with water and then squeezing them so the water came out from its mouth and splashed all of them at the same time. Luke loved those rubber fishes; he couldn't hold back his beautiful laughter.

"Wanna try and splash dad, sweetie?" El asked her son, holding him still and taking one of the fishes next to her.

"Like that time in the fair, El, remember?" asked Mike, remembering that time during winter in 1991 when he was back home for his Christmas break and the entire party went to a fair in Indianapolis.

In one of those games they had to splash some water with a toy gun and keep the water flow steady and directly to a plastic frog's mouth until the bell rings. That night Mike won a musical teddy bear he gave to his girlfriend and Eleven slept with it during the entire time

Mike was in college.

"Yes how could I forget! Oh, I would love to take him to a fair like that someday, see if he likes cotton candy as much as I do."

Mike smiled, delighted by the beautiful woman he married and he leaned to kiss her softly. She hummed in his mouth, those delicious lips as tasty and sweet as the cotton candy she ate on that fair. That one cotton candy he bought her and, somehow, she ended up eating seven.

"Think he'll eat as many as I did?" she whispered on his lips, she couldn't stop kissing him.

"I am sure he will."

They both laughed remembering the way the candy salesman held his mouth open as Eleven kept stuffing her face with one cotton candy after the other and thanking Mike for buying them. They spent a couple of seconds kissing when Luke made his presence known again and they smiled at each other then pull apart.

"Okay, son, here. Look at me." said Mike and kissed their little bold miracle's forehead and leaned on his level pointing at his open mouth.

El held the rubber fish in front of the baby so he could squish it and then the water went out of the fish mouth directly to Mike's who made funny noises and faces, making his son and wife laugh hard.

They kept playing with his son, throwing water with the fishes and helping Luke to swim and jump in the water, enjoying a perfect family moment when the inevitable happened.

They couldn't quite explain it in that moment and yet they knew exactly that was bound to happen one day but, they weren't ready, none of them.

After playing, Mike and Eleven were sitting next to each other just talking and sharing a bunch of kisses while holding their little boy, helping him practice how to walk with the support the water gave to him as he floated when they suddenly heard him laugh at something.

They looked at him and found him staring at something but when they turned, they could only see the back of the house and the table with the lemonade jar and biscuits so they figured Luke saw a butterfly or something. They both went back to their conversation, reminiscing about that day in the fair when Eleven ate all those cotton candy sticks but then, fast and unexpectedly a little brown ball came flying right in the middle of them towards their son and he just took it and ate it with no second thoughts.

But, as far as they knew, biscuits don't usually fly and, if they had any doubt of what had just happened while they looked at their baby eating the chocolate biscuit unbeknownst to his parents shock, he finished his biscuit and pointed at the table, opened his hand and another little brown ball flew right into his tiny palm. He smiled proudly to his mom and dad and then, just like that, he ate another biscuit.

That day was the day when Luke Wheeler showed mommy and daddy how he truly was their special little one.

That was the first day of the many that followed; every day as he kept growing up, as he became the cutest boy they had ever seen, he also showed his parents how he could reach for so many little objects in the table without being anywhere nearby, or how he could grab his pacifier if it fell down without leaning and inch, or how he could take of his blanket without touching it if he was too warm. He could even make the lights in the house blink all at once every time Bananas in Pyjamas started.

That day had been the first day in which the decision Eleven didn't want to take had revealed to both of them and now, a day before his first day of school, they had reach the moment when they would have to talk to their little boy and tell him about a part of her life she had buried a long, long time ago.

It was time to tell Luke where mom came from.

"Baby, relax." whispered Mike in her ear. His arms wrapped around her body and she didn't know when she buried her face on his chest. She took a deep breath; she could always find comfort in his arms no matter what.

Eleven sighed; her voice muffled in his chest. "Do you think he'll be afraid of me?"

She knew it was probably a stupid question, after all she shared the same abilities her son had showed them at the moment, (although Luke didn't know that; she never used her powers in front of him. In fact, as far as he knows, mommy's name 'El' was short for Eleanor since she didn't like her whole name). Anyway, she couldn't help but being afraid and, at the same time, she didn't want to be so stressed because that would only hurt the baby inside of her, and that got her even more worried.

"Honey, listen to me." said Mike holding her face in his hands so she would look at him and pay attention to what he had to say. "I'm gonna be next to you the whole time and as soon as you feel like it gets to hard, all you have to do is nod and I'll continue. He is smart, he *will* understand."

"I just... I just need him to understand that he can't use his powers in front of people, nor even talk about them. And, what if a kid is mean to him and he can't control it?"

The thought of their son being in danger because of his powers scared them beyond imagination itself. They couldn't even think of losing him and, at the same time, they would never refuse him the chance to live like a normal kid; they would never take his life away from him like Brenner did to Eleven.

Mike kissed her and she kissed him back, taking his lips as a courage elixir and filling her heart with the glow and warmth he could only give her. Her husband's lips, the same lips she could never get enough from.

"That's why we are telling him the truth, El. Have faith, we can do this." he said when they pulled apart, filling her with hope, always shining like the sun when it cuts through clouds of storm.

Eleven finally nodded and smiled at him, marvelling with his deep chocolate eyes. "I love you, Mike."

His smile was everything she needed. "I love you too, El."

El leaned for another kiss filled with love and gratitude because he is always by her side, because he always supports her no matter what and then she took Mike's hand and they walked back to the living room where Luke was doodling, practicing his alphabet and numbers like they taught him.

"Luke, come her for a moment. Mom and I need to talk to you about something important." said Mike sitting next to his wife on the couch.

The little boy turned to his parents and nodded, leaving his paper sheet and his pen on the coffee table and stood next to them, smiling the entire time.

Eleven looked at him, the last time she would see her son looking at her as the mother he always knew because, after their talk, she'd become someone else. She wouldn't be just 'mom' anymore; she would become 'eleven', the number, again. She took a deep breath and felt Mike hand holding hers.

She smiled, she could do it.

"Sweetie, come here." said the young woman and took his little hand. Mike helped him climb to his lap so Eleven had him close.

"What is it, mommy?" his beautiful eyes noticed something wasn't right.

Eleven took a deep breath. "Sweetie, tomorrow you'll start kindergarten, right?" she asked and he nodded, although he wondered why mom asked something she knew already; El continued. "Okay, so you know dad and I are both so proud of you; you are so smart, so caring and we know you are going to make tons of friends. We are completely sure everyone will like you because you are such a special little boy and... Well, you know you are not only special because you are our son, but also because –"

"Because I can do magic?" asked the kid, helping mom finish her sentence.

Both Mike and El couldn't help but snicker. It wasn't exactly what they were expecting to hear but his innocence certainly helped the

situation and also eased the tension. She nodded.

"Yes darling, because you can do magic." El replied and took his hands, stroking the back of them with her thumb. "Luke, do you remember how when we visit grandma and grandpa Wheeler, or when we go to the park, dad and I ask you *not* to use your magic because not all kids can do magic and they could be jealous?"

Luke nodded. Just like they explained that not everyone have the same possibilities, or how some parents can't buy things to their kids that his own parents can and that's why he should share his toys if someone wanted to play with him in the park because not everyone can afford them; they also explained that some people can get jealous and be mean with him because of that so that's how they told him not to use his magic in front of others, because that's something they wouldn't have no matter how much money their families have.

"I remember. You want me to show it tomorrow?" he asked, thinking it was time for him to show everyone what he could do. He was a little stunned when mom and dad looked at each other and then said no.

"No, sweetheart, in fact that's the one thing you can never show to anyone that isn't daddy and me." Eleven sighed; she knew she wasn't making any progress. "It's hard for us to tell you this, we know you can't always control it but maybe that's because you never had to. Here at home is okay, maybe in front of grandma and grandpa Hopper but tomorrow, at school, we need you to keep it a secret."

The kid lean his head to a side, he didn't understand. Until that moment his parents had never, ever, told him not to do something. Sure, they sometimes asked him not to grab the scissors or not to play with his food, they told him not to eat candy when dinner is almost ready but that was it; yet it was something on mommy's tone and daddy's eyes that warned him something was wrong. Very wrong.

He couldn't help but ask. "Why?"

His innocence only made it harder. How could they explain the reasons behind it? Eleven looked at Mike and he shook his head, not knowing what to say. Luke stared at his hand and El leaned and

kissed them softly.

"I love you so much." she whispered, kissing his knuckles. "Because..." because the world is a beautiful place but is also very dangerous; because it is as filled with good people as is filled with horrible, mean ones. Because their family and friends, themselves, they have all seen what evil and selfish purposes could cause. Because they faced horror and fought against it but, how could she explain to a four year old boy all of that when that little boy believed that B1 and B2 were gigantic bananas and who existed in real life?

How could they explain how complex society is, how people fears what they can't understand, how they usually hate someone who's different without any other reason?

Luke looked at his mom with the same puppy eyes Eleven used so many times before when she was a kid and he looked down at his own chubby, freckled hands in his mother's ones; he frowned at how strange she was acting and how worried his parents looked. How odd it was that they asked him to never use his magic when he loved it so much. Suddenly he thought about those old black and white movies his parents and his uncles like to watch and he remembered one where a bunch of people in a village wanted to hurt a group of kids who could do stuff like he did. He remembered the word those people yelled at those kids.

What Luke said next broke their parent's hearts into a million pieces.

"I'm a monster."

That. That was the one thing neither Mike nor El never wanted to hear.

They looked at each other dumbfounded; shocked at their son resolution and how sad it was to hear him said it with his sweet, innocent voice. His eyes so big rapidly filling with tears; his lips quivered and it was the saddest look they had ever seen before.

Eleven felt like a monster her entire childhood, Mike also saw how she blamed herself for the things that happened in the past and it took him years to convince her she wasn't a monster of any kind.

That the only monsters were the man behind the lab and the last thing they wanted was for their child to think he was one.

"No, sweetie, you are not a monster, you hear me?" said Eleven taking his face in her hands, she wasn't as calm as she wanted to be. "You are not a monster; don't you ever say something like that again."

Mike caressed her back in an attempt to calm her down and also put a hand on his son's curl, playing with them and kissing it.

"Son, listen to mom. Listen to us." he asked, burying his fingers in his son's hair. "Mom and I love you more than anything in the world. You and the new baby mean the world to us and we will always be proud of you. What we are trying to say is..."

He couldn't think of anything else, even if they had decided that Eleven should be the one to talk to the kid because it was her life after all, Mike realized she couldn't really talk about it when Luke suggested he was a monster too. He told her he would carry on if she couldn't do it, he told her he'd step up if she needed and only by looking at her El nodded and agreed to what Mike had in mind.

He took a deep breath and looked at his son.

"Luke, have I ever told you about the Princess of Hawkins?" asked Mike to his kid.

If there was something Luke loved even more than his Bananas show and his Play Doh set, were his dad's bed time stories. The boy shook his head and looked at his daddy with interest given that that was a Princess they never talked about before. El looked at him too, always holding Luke's tiny hands.

Mike continued.

"Well..." he said taking another deep breath and praying for the message to be clear. "Once upon a time, before your grandparents were born, a little girl, a Princess was a prisoner in a place she couldn't escape from. This Princess lived far away from other kids, from her family; she didn't even know how the sun looked like."

The boy paid attention to him. "Like Rapunzel?"

Mike and El smiled at him; his innocence always melting their hearts.

"Yes, sweetie, just like Rapunzel except..." Mike looked at his wife as if asking permission; she nodded. "Except she didn't live in a tower; she lived in a lab and she didn't have long hair. In fact, she had no hair at all."

The little boy looked at his father and Eleven immediately clarified what her son had in mind. "The lab where daddy works is another kind of lab, darling. Daddy does good things for people; but the lab where the Princess was prisoner was a place where they took everything away from her, even her hair and her own name."

Luke couldn't help but think about his parents and how they both always supported him and helped him and loved him no matter what, which made him wonder why the Princess had to suffer what the bad people did to her.

"But, why didn't her family help her?" asked the boy. In his head, the family was something everyone had and no one, not one child, should go through the things his parents told him about.

"Because when she was a baby, a very bad man took her away from her mom. He took away her family and also her name; he even labelled her as a thing with the number 011 instead. Then when her mom was this close to rescue her that same bad man and many others caught her and hurt her. They took everything away from the Princess because she could do things no other kid could."

They both looked at their son, their voices as sweet and soft as never before, trying their best to tell such horrible story in a way it wouldn't scar their boy for life.

Luke looked down at his own hands again, playing with his fingers and in his little head he placed two and two together even when he still didn't know what math was. Mike said it before, he is a very smart boy and his answer was the proof.

"The Princess did magic like me, didn't she?"

Mike nodded firmly and Eleven felt hot tears in her eyes and a lump

in her throat.

"Yes, honey, she did." answered Mike. "That magic or powers she had were all this bunch of especial abilities the Princess was born with. She barely knew what she could do because the bad man did everything he could to control and make sure the Princess not only didn't use her powers much but he also kept her from really knowing what she could do. All he cared was for her to do things he wanted to do."

The little kid was afraid to know the answer to the question he did next. "What... What did he want the Princess to do, dad?"

Mike sighed.

"To hurt people, sweetheart."

Eleven let Mike tell the rest of the story while she kept caressing her son's hands as he kept telling him everything. It was his story too, what brought them together.

She didn't say much else, she just let him be the one to talk and while he did, while Mike kept telling his son all those awful things those terrible people did to her (disguised under a cloth of fantasy because his son was only four years old); El could see once again what made her fell in love with him.

It was far more than the help or the life or the love he gave to her; it was seeing that Mike really understood everything she'd been through and yet, in his own words as he kept telling his son about the Princess who found a real monster and she had to kill people in order to survive; Eleven could feel in his voice and his eyes that he never, *ever*, judged her.

Yes, she knew that because he was the one who spent so many nights telling her that she wasn't a monster and that she did what she had to do because there was no other choice, that she had to put her life first but even then, even after everything he told her, Eleven saw as clear as never before that Mike understood exactly how big was the weight in her shoulders and how big was the guilt she was carrying on. Because he felt her pain as his own.

There, as Mike kept talking, she could also see how important it was for him to give her the life they have now; how big it was for him to make her happy and give her the world every single day because he needed to compensate and heal all those years of constant abuse she had to go through. Because maybe until that day as El heard her story told as if it was a fairytale, she hadn't fully understand really how terrible was the beginning of life; even if she was the one who had to live through that, she realized that hearing it from outside like he did, was even more terrible.

All those years of torture, pain, tears, hunger, cold, loneliness, yelling, beating; all the nights she kept locked while crying her eyes out, all of that was a punishment because she was born with a gift she never asked for. She thought that no matter how much she explain Mike what she had to deal with he would never understand half of the abuse even if when he tries, but now she realized he understood how big and disgusting it was. He understood everything probably more than she did and it hurt him too. But then, no matter how horrible and how scary it was, he told their son how a tiny group of kids took over the risks and fears and helped the Princess so they could save her from the bad men who wanted to hurt her. Eleven saw once more and also as if it was the first time, how big, shiny and overwhelmingly pure was the love Mike had given her from the moment he set eyes on her.

It was amazing; after all those years, after a wedding, a son and a baby on his way, her husband Michael Wheeler – the most wonderful man ever existed – could make Eleven fall in love a million times stronger than she felt already.

She couldn't add anything else to Mike's story because he was telling it with the years of practice of being The Dungeons Master had given to him. The week that changed her life forever told as if it was another bed time story so Luke could see that, even if it was nothing wrong with him, it truly was necessary for him to keep his abilities (his magic) under control and secret because no one knows if there is someone in the shadows waiting. They could be there, lurking, hiding...

Of course they never meant to scare him, they wouldn't pretend for Luke to live with fear, in fact Eleven saw in his bright honey eyes

that the sadness he originally felt for the Princess had turned into admiration when Mike told him she saved those kids too with her powers because, even if those powers had to be kept a secret, those powers also made her unique and she was a wonderful girl for reasons beyond her abilities.

When Mike finished his story El realized that the mother of all truths was just around the corner, but it was okay. She saw how relax and happy was Luke because the story ended with the Princess and the Paladin kissing.

"What happened next, dad? Did the Princess, I mean the Mage and the Paladin got married?" asked the little boy, always ready for more. The anguish and fear of someone taking him away from mommy and daddy was far away and he finally understood why he should keep his magic to himself. He also understood that not everyone was evil because then, the Princess would still be a prisoner.

Mike looked at Eleven and she smiled, she was ready. He nodded.

"Yes, sweetheart. They got married and lived happily ever after because they had a beautiful boy whose freckles drive his mommy crazy and he has his daddy's smile; that boy also loves to draw and practice his alphabet and numbers and he is a big fan of a show with gigantic fruit wearing human clothes. And you know what? The Princess and the Paladin are about to give his son a little brother or sister soon."

The boy smiled but then he frowned and turned his head as if he just realized something.

Eleven and Mike looked at each other, her breathing was heavy because of what she was about to reveal as she rolled up her sleeve. She usually doesn't hide her tattoo because not only she learned to ignore it but also because it was so blurry it was hard to tell what it was if you don't know those are numbers; but that day Luke was about to learn that that thing in mommy's arm is not a freckle of any kind.

The puzzle pieces begun to join and form the big picture his parents had put in front of him and Luke looked back at his mom and dad.

His mom and his dad who play Dungeons and Dragons with his aunt and uncles are also the Mage and the Paladin when they play. His mom and dad also had a son – him – who practices his alphabet and his numbers in his notebooks and he also loves a show with gigantic bananas so much that he doesn't even eat bananas because he doesn't want to murder B1 and B2's family. And his mom and dad are also about make him a big brother in a couple of months.

"Darling..." Eleven called and Luke put the eyes he inherited from her on the arm she had uncovered and he saw, as if it was crystal clear, that the weird freckle in mommy's arm are actually numbers. Numbers on her skin like the Princess from the story had.

His eyes went huge, the image falling heavy on his head and he finally knew that the fantasy, the monsters, the courage and love, everything they told him a minute ago was really the story of his own parents.

"Mom, dad... You..."

His eyes filled with hot tears and when they nodded, the little boy hugged his parents with all the strength his tiny arms had. He never wanted to let go.

Even when he was still very young to feel anything else than a knot on his tummy and a lot, *a lot* of questions, with the years that followed and as he kept growing up, Luke Wheeler would eventually understand a lot better the look on his parents faces and how big was the love they held for each other. His mom and dad who had saved each other in many ways and loved each other from the moment they met; his mommy and his daddy who told him the truth and their story, their families story, in order to protect him from the evil in the world so nobody could ever take him away or take advantage of him because of what he could do.

After a couple of minutes of tears and hugs, support and unconditional love, Luke promised he would never use magic in front of anyone that isn't mommy and daddy and grandma and grandpa Hopper. After a couple of minutes when the three of them were relax Luke asked why didn't his nose bleed when he uses his abilities and they explained that maybe it was because El's nose doesn't bleed

anymore, and probably he was stronger too. When Luke felt better he simply climbed off from his parents lap and went back to the coffee table and back to his notebook.

Mike and Eleven felt like they could breathe again. He placed his arms around her shoulders and the other on her belly and she rested her head on his chest, knowing he was the one and he will always be.

Suddenly an idea popped in Luke's brain and he turned back to his parents.

"Mommy, the number in your arm, does it hurt?"

Eleven shrugged and Mike smiled and did the same, both quite comfortable with the questions he will inevitably have.

"No, sweetie, it did hurt when they put it there but it doesn't anymore. Besides I learned to ignore it; it brings back the darkest period of my life but that's all behind now. The happiness you, the baby, daddy and everyone had given to me is far greater than this tattoo." El answered and Mike kissed her forehead as a thank you for what she said and the love she gave him in return.

Nevertheless, the kid paid attention to the pen in his hand and then at his parents and how they started sharing kisses and, with the idea he had now much more clear, he went back to his parents and started doodling on his mother's tattoo without asking.

"Hey, what are you doing, son?" asked Mike in between giggles, looking at his little boy and smiling.

El giggled too, looking at how concentrated he could get while her son wrote on her skin, but they weren't ready to hear what he said once he finished.

"Daddy turned mommy's number into a name. Daddy you gave mommy her name, right?" asked the boy remembering how in the story the Paladin turned a label into a one of a kind name for a one of a kind girl.

Mike and El nodded and Luke finished his drawing with the brightest smile. "Now I do the same."

Eleven raised her arm and both her and Mike started welling up when they saw how his innocence closed the final door, sealing the past where it belongs so it never comes back. Because Luke, with his imagination and creativity, found a way to turn that number tattoo into something else, just like he learned from his dad.

He drew two tiny lines in between the 11 number, then he shaped the 0 and finally he drew a final letter 'm' next to the zero; and just with that Luke wrote in one word what Eleven was for him, what she would always be.

'Mom'.

oOoOoOoOoOo

*Hello everyone and **welcome** back to my series of one-shots! As explained in the last two chapters I was leaving this one on hold because I wanted to focus on the my other story **PROM NIGHT** (which is published and finished with 7 beautiful chapters; if you wanna read it just check my list and you'll find it but remember to **review** it.)*

Okay, as for this one some of you already know that I publish here one-shots from their life as teenagers, in college years, adulthood and parenthood. Also, if you guys have any request, you can ask for it on the comments.

*Announcement: I will write another separate story aside from this one soon but, this time, I won't leave Weird Stuff paused. I'm gonna publish a chapter here and a chapter on the new story once it starts, meanwhile please read here and enjoy and most of all **review** because I will **ONLY** continue **as long as I have feedback**. I'm serious.*

I do want to leave you guys the chance to choose what chapter is next. I'm going to leave a list with the title of the chapters and the year in which they take place as the only clue and you guys can vote in your review which you wanna read next. I'll put together the results from your votes with the Spanish version's votes and then we'll have the next chapter. (I have to write it first, so do it quick because the more reviews I get the faster I'll write).

: MINE - 1984

: *DANCE WITH ME* - 2006

: *LEMONADE* - 1988

: *WHY ME?* - 1997

: *EVERY DAY, EVERY HOUR* - 1989

: *PROMISE* - 1993

: *STAR GAZING* - 1986

: *MY GIRL* - 1993

: *PRIORITIES* - 1990

: *THE ONLY ONE* - 2007

: *YOU* - 1984

: *A LITTLE FREEDOM* – 1984

That said I hope you guys enjoyed this one and please leave a comment! Happy new year and I know it's a happy one because we finally have a new teaser, a poster and a release date. This is so exciting!

Until next chapter!

9. Star Gazing

[A/N: There's a lot of work in this chapter. Research, interviews with people who saw the object mentioned in this story, weather research and emails to the planetarium so **PLEASE**, leave a comment. Us author's work hard to bring a nice story for you and remember English isn't my first language so I apologize for the mistakes. Now, enjoy.]

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Rated: T. / Romance - Friendship. / (Eleven & Mike), Dustin, Will, Lucas, Max, Hopper.

xx

STAR GAZING

April 4th, 1986.

"I hate this bullshit!" Max growled, taking out her fury by scratching her math notebook as hard as she could. She just couldn't get why she wasn't getting the same result as Lucas.

"Babe, let me, I'll explain you again, relax!" Lucas was leaning on his hand while she did her work but had to reach and calm her, trying to take the pencil from her. "Besides if you keep doing this you'll have no more notebooks to practice on."

Max glare at him. "Watch it, stalker. I am really not on the mood right now!"

Lucas was taken out of guard. "What did I do?"

"You... You understand this motherfucker thing and I don't!" Max whined, her hair was a complete mess since she pulled it repeatedly every time she got stuck. She was the embodiment of desperation by now.

"Shh!" asked Will putting a finger on his lips and looking around them to their schoolmates sitting on the tables nearby. "I don't have anything against your cursing Max, but you are yelling. It's just math."

"No, Max is right this... this is bullshit." mumbled El although her eyes were glued to her own notebook, struggling with her algebra equation while Mike had one hand around her waist and the other holding a pencil, ready to help if she needed.

Will, Lucas and Mike looked at each other holding back a snicker. Not only because of Max desperation but also because, even when El used to curse because *duh*, she hangs out with them, it was always funny to hear her saying those things with her sweet, delicate voice.

Eleven and Max glared at the boys and all three of them just looked back at what they were doing: Will went back to his own notebook, Mike to his girlfriend's equations and Lucas to the sky, pretending to pay attention to a bunch of birds. Actually they weren't laughing at them (that, never), because they understood how frustrating it was when you can't figure something or when you are struggling with a difficult subject because everyone needs help once in a while; what amused them a little – maybe a lot – was how much hatred the girls had towards the subject itself. They both hated it and they expressed it in very different yet similar ways: Max praying that Mrs. Macmillan falls and maybe broke an arm and Eleven thinking how bad it would be if the desk with the test they'll take just happens to explode.

Mike always explain Eleven and helped her with her homework because not only she trusts him to get all the answers she needed and learn as much as she could since for her what Mike says is a fact, but also because only he could explain anything to her a hundred time if it was necessary with same tenderness and patience he did the first time. And El is smart but math was always a big problem mainly because she simply hated it.

That day three of them had to take the test from last week again with other students who failed. Max got a D -, Will had a really bad cold so he missed the test and El got a C and she wouldn't allow that a freaking C spoils her report card which until then was filled with A in every subject. Mike, Lucas and Dustin got an A+ like always.

"Okay, so if this isn't bullshit then how you explain that this fucking graphic has more doodles than my own signature?" Max asked Lucas and then stabbed the paper sheets with her pencil. Lucas almost laughed again but Eleven spoke.

"You're right, Max, why doesn't it have to be words and letters in here? Wasn't math a subject with numbers?" she complained, her biggest problem was a '*sin*' she couldn't get rid off.

"Which word?" asked Will; he understood everything, he was only keeping them company.

"This one." pointed El. "I had problems with the X and the Y; I may have accepted all those '*(a & b)*' crap but, since when do we have to put up with an '*n, i, z* and *sin*'? What... Why '*sin*'?"

"Because it is a SIN, El, that's why." huffed Max, getting back to her problem and stabbing the equation a little more.

This time the boys couldn't hold it, Lucas barely covered his mouth so Max wouldn't see him, Will took a tissue as if was blowing his nose and Mike leaned to kiss his girlfriend's forehead; El tried pushing him but a little smile betrayed her because, after all, he is so sweet.

"I'm so proud of you for taking the test again. You are only nervous, El, but believe me you know this." he assured her; his fingers caressing her cheek and his smile giving her his trust.

Eleven pressed her forehead on his lips and sighed in relief. "You'd be proud even if I can only score a B -?"

Mike nodded, kissing her nose. "Of course, B for 'beautiful, so it'd match with you."

She smiled wider. "So, which word do I get if I score an A?"

He seemed to give a thought and then smiled. "Astonishing beautiful?"

Now El couldn't hold her giggles anymore, she felt the weight of the test becoming a lot lighter thanks to Mike. Max, on the other hand, curled her nose in disgust watching them and how extremely sweet

they could be. She looked at her own boyfriend who was smiling at her, she pointed at him with her pencil.

"Don't you dare saying something as cheesy as Wheeler or I'll kill you." Max warned and got back to her equation but Lucas laughed and then whispered something in her ear about how he could still find a word to cheer her up if she gets an F.

She didn't kill him, but she blushed deep red.

"Hey, I've got some great news!" yelled Dustin as he arrived to his friends with the newspaper he bought a couple minutes ago. He placed it on the table, excusing himself with the girls. "We have the first pictures. Would you look at this beauty?"

El thanked him internally when Dustin interrupted; Mike always said that when you're struggling with something the best you can do is stop, because forcing things can be worst... But when he was struggling with school stuff he never followed his own advice and could easily fall sick after being so stressed since he never allowed his report card to show any less than perfect grades. Karen always nagged him about it, they both did but El couldn't really complain, after all sick Mike is the cutest thing.

"Man, look at that. Those pictures are amazing, have you ever seen something this beautiful?" asked Will, leaning to the newspaper.

"I know dude." agreed Lucas, admiring the pictures on *Hawkins News* and talking to it like if he was talking to a kitten. "Hi there pretty, hi." Max huffed.

Meanwhile El paid attention to Mike as he looked at the pictures in the newspaper with absolute wonder while Dustin read the article about the spaceships that different agencies of the world sent to explore the comet. The arrival of Comet Halley caused great impact and massive expectations around the world since the beginning of the previous year – being that the comet would become visible from October 1985 until that day –, visiting the sky for a couple more weeks before it continues its way.

Eleven knew about the comet from Mike, obviously, and it was him

who told her everything he knew about its history and he also showed her some pictures he had on his COSMOS copy and they even went to the library to show her some pictures NASA took since it entered their orbit in 1978, so she was as excited as him and everyone else when on last January 28th the Challenger begun his journey towards the magnificent comet. Tragically and only two minutes after the spaceship had launched it exploded before the eyes of the entire world, killing all seven brave astronauts while their families witnessed everything. It had been the saddest day, but then being able to watch the images and read about the data given by the other agencies which sent VEGA 1 and 2, made them remember about those heroes and how they are now watching said comet better than anyone else.

Besides the fact that the agencies sent spaceships was very convenient since the comet was on the opposite side of the Sun from the Earth during this visit, making it a faint and distant object since it was like 40 million miles away from them.

Anyway it was still visible to the naked eye and they had all planned to wait until it made its closest approach so they could see it at its best; that night they were all staying at Will's to have a sleepover and then before sunrise they'd go into the woods to the quarry and watch the comet before the Sun comes out. They even had binoculars and the telescope Lucas got for his birthday for that particular event, given that this amazing spectacle would return in 2061.

Mike's face was lit up with fascination as he looked at the pictures; El knew just how much he loved that comet and how happy he was because its arrival, his enthusiasm made her stomach flutter. That was one of the many things she loved about him; how passionate and happy he could get with everything related with science or sci-fi or Astronomy, or well, all the things Max used to call 'dork stuff'.

El thought about the nights they spent resting in his backyard or out of the cabin watching the stars while he gave away all he had learned about the constellations and galaxies and the stories created since mankind started paying attention to the night sky. How from a tiny particle the entire Universe was created and how it evolved during billions of years so they could be there, just a wonderful boy talking about those shiny dots to his girlfriend as she rested her head next to

him, admiring the stars above them.

"Imagine this." said Mike once, they had been looking the stars a couple of hours already, waiting for Hopper to pick her up. "All the generations, every story about what happened to them, every war, every love story, everyone who lived on this planet and everyone, every creature you ever read or heard about; they all came from this tiny blue dot in the universe which we live in."

El smiled against his chest.

"Carl Sagan." she whispered and sighed at how comfortable and happy she felt, especially when Mike caressed her hair the way he had been doing it while telling her stuff about stars.

Of course he never intended for her to believe he was the author of such beautiful words; he was planning to tell her it was one of Carl Sagan's quotes but, the fact that El remembered and recognized his favourite astronomer gave Mike a sense of unimaginable joy that he simply stopped thinking. He just pulled her in his arms and started making out with her while resting in his lawn not even caring that his neighbours or his parents might catch them.

El smiled thinking about that kiss; thinking how sweet Mike is and how easy was to trigger the most passionate sides of him by only mentioning stuff about the things he loved so much. People call him nerd, yeah, but he is *her* nerd and she loves every nerdy part of him.

"How big is it?" asked Mike, always wanting to learn more; just another amazing aspect of him.

Dustin looked for the part where it said what Mike wanted to know and then continued reading.

"Astrophysicist working in Canary Islands estimated when the comet was at 300 million kilometres from our planet that it's outside diameter was 7600 kilometres and this dimension could increase around four/five times larger when Halley is only 60 million kilometres from Earth from last December to this day. They also estimated its tail, which is made of dust and gas, to be twice larger, approaching the same distance from Ursa Major to Polar Star, which means the comet is around 10 million

kilometres long. 'Holly fuck!'

Everyone was stunned by how big it really was and they understood better why they could still see it even with such unfortunate position but, even if they could still spot it in the sky during those few months, they wanted to share a nice experience together going next to the quarry and see the comet before sunrise. Just another adventure, a new memory they'll share since, by the time Halley comes back, they'll be really old or, maybe, they would probably not be around anymore.

But, for the time being, they had to stop looking at the sky and pay attention to what was happening down there, more specifically when the bell called Will, Max and El and reminded there was a test waiting to happen.

"Fuck, fuck!" Max hissed, gathering all of her stuff in a hurry and looking more desperate than before. "Is there any chance that this freaking comet falls directly on Mrs. MacMillan's head?"

Lucas and everyone tried to hold their snickers but it was practically impossible. They felt a little bad for Max because she is always so confident and now she looks so scared it was almost cute.

"Good luck, babe, you're gonna do great." said Lucas caressing her arm and she frowned.

"You are actually saying 'good luck', stalker? No no, you are walking me to the door, lets go!" demanded the girl and pulled her boyfriend next to her, grabbing him by his jacket while everyone laughed outright.

Will shook his head walking behind them and Dustin followed. Finally Mike took El's stuff and wrapped an arm around her shoulders as they walked inside and she kept studying her equations. He knew she feels better when he's there and Mike also knew she would do a great job.

And they did, even when they'll know for sure next Monday, at least El and Max left the classroom quite relaxed. Their results were the same and they remembered everything they had to do.

"Geez, I hope we don't fail, it wasn't so bad after all." said Will walking next to them down the hallway to meet their friends outside.

"Byers, you know you'll get an A+ the same way I know birds can fly." said Max rolling her eyes.

Nerds, they were all nerds even Eleven because of how much she cared about stuff in general. That and because she was glued to Wheeler like 24/7.

When they walked out they already found the boys waiting for them next to their bikes. Lucas would give Max a ride given that her mother – aka, Neil – took her skateboard because of the test she failed but not before he could give her one of his sexist speeches, saying a girl shouldn't skate because that's *boys* stuff.

"Hey, finally! How was it?" asked Dustin with enthusiasm and giving them a great smile.

Will answered first.

"Not bad, I think we all passed. I mean she didn't ask for anything we haven't seen before, so..."

Max rolled her eyes again and leaned on Lucas's bike.

"He still *thinks* he'll pass, I can't believe him." said Max pointing at Will, accusing him for being that humble. Maybe too humble. "Tell me one thing, losers; did anyone ever fail a test before?"

The boys all snorted as if it was obvious. "Pff, no!"

El didn't answer, she knew she was talking to the boys but she did fail the previous test so, until she is a hundred percent sure she passed it, she'll remain silent.

Max pointed at them in a 'see what I mean' gesture and stared at Will; he simply shrugged.

"What do think El?" asked Mike to his girlfriend, whispering in her ear. His minty breath tickling her skin as his lips pressed gently against her cheek.

El felt goose bumps crawling her insides from head to toes. "I think I passed. There was no '*sin*' in our test so I think we are okay." she answered with a smile.

Mike beamed at her and wrapped his arms around her waist, his eyes softening and he leaned to her lips but he didn't kiss her yet. He simply rubbed his nose with hers.

"I told you, so... What was your prize if you got an A?"

El laughed, her cheeks burning and her eyes sparkling. "A kiss that would blow my head off, but I still don't know if I got an A or a B or whatever." answered El, although she was already holding Mike by his neck with no intention of letting go. Her eyes were glued to his lips, so sweet, so close.

He smiled again. "Well, let's say I trust you, baby."

The rest of the party groaned like they always did every time Mike and El made such public demonstrations of love, but they should be used to them by now, besides none of them really cared what they think. Mike and Eleven connected their lips and started kissing like if they were the only two people in there, almost like if they forgot their friends or the entire school could see them. That was part of their magic, the spell they had each other into every time they'd kiss, hug or simply held hands; the world vanished and there were only them and no one else.

So what if people watch? So what if people groaned? They could watch and groan as much as they wanted to because Eleven felt Mike's lips moving against her and his tongue asking for entrance which she happily granted and nothing could be as big as the ticklish she felt when her boyfriend kisses her, not even people complaining, or algebra equations filled with letter and imaginary numbers; nothing could distract her from Mike's lips when he was kissing her like *that*. Those were the 'congratulations kisses' as she likes to call them and if being kissed the way he was kissing her was what she achieved every time she gets an A then that, ladies and gentlemen, is the reason why Eleven held with pride a perfect report card.

"All I'm saying is that if everyone will go to sleep and then wake up early then; why can't you just sleep here and then I give you a ride?" asked Hopper leaning against her doorframe while she packed her pyjamas and a couple stuff for that night.

El tried not to roll her eyes too much. It's been a while since her dad started pondering whether to let her stay with her friends or not when they planned sleepovers. At first she understood why he wasn't so convinced given that he was afraid someone might kidnap her but, as time went by – and by time she meant as she kept growing up –, Hopper's fears became less related with government issues and more with the fact that she was now a teenager.

It wasn't something they had talked about but Eleven could feel that talk closer and closer and she knew that her father's fear was that she and Mike may do a little more than just sleep when she visits his house of when he takes her to the cabin after school. Certainly it didn't help that Hopper caught them making out like a thousand times when he came home from work and they were eating each other's faces instead of doing the homework sprawled around the floor. Oh well.

Besides, to be honest, he was overreacting; even if she wasn't going to tell him what was her relationship status (because *duh*, that's her father), both Mike and El were still very far away from having sex. They haven't even talked about it, they weren't even thinking of talking about it and yeah, they obviously felt a little special at the end of the day because they usually kiss in every opportunity they have, pulling the other against the first wall they'd find or Dustin's locker. Of course there were a lot of hormones swirling around after they had a long make out session but even so, Hopper really had nothing to be afraid of.

"Dad, I don't want you to wake up in the middle of the night and have you driven me all the way to Will's with this weather." answered the girl, trying to be as sweet as she could.

Hopper continued. "It's no problem, kid."

It was so obvious that he didn't want her spending the night somewhere else that it was actually a little cute, but they both knew

he wasn't going to tell her she couldn't go. After all Eleven is as stubborn as a mule and he knows that when she wants something she gets it, besides there was no real reason why he could refuse letting her go.

"Dad, it's not just that. We need to be there before sunrise if we want to see the comet at its best and you take too long to wake up." she said sincerely and smiling a bit.

Hopper pretended to be offended but she was actually telling the truth. He stared at his beer and tried something else.

"Well..." he begun. "Why can't Wheeler come and pick you up then?"

It wasn't unusual for Mike to pick her up with his bike but she was a little tired of her father's antics.

"I am not asking my boyfriend to wake up earlier than necessary and have him bike in the middle of the night with this cold all the way from Will's house to here and then back into the woods only because you want, dad!" said El a bit angry now.

"Wow wow, relax kid. It was only an innocent suggestion" he said as if she didn't know what was behind this thought. "Anyway, I guess is fine, in not like if Joyce wouldn't be there watching you kids."

He practically hissed that last part and Eleven heard him so, before they could start an ugly fight, she simply closed her bedroom door and left him outside so she could finish packing.

Around 9:00, six very familiar knocks on the door told them Mike had arrived and Eleven unlocked the door in a second and ran to hug him as if she hadn't seen him in years; she actually saw him only two hours ago when he dropped her off after their ice cream date.

"Mmmh! Missed you so much!" said El, her voice muffled since she buried her face on his chest while she gave him a tight hug.

Mike, sweet and loving as always, smiled and kissed the top of her head, hugging her too. "Missed you too, El."

Hopper felt like throwing up.

"For the love of God, you two saw each other like two hours ago!" he complained from the couch, although he didn't turn around. He knew if he did then he'd find them kissing in a very inappropriate way. "I swear that if I get diabetes you two are the only ones to blame."

Mike rolled his eyes after he kissed his girlfriend. "Hi again Chief." he said trying not to be disrespectful.

The man waved his beer in the air in response. El huffed but immediately beamed at her boyfriend and gave him another kiss.

"Did you bring the binoculars?" asked the girl in excitement and bouncing on her feet, holding Mike's hands. She really couldn't wait for them to see the comet. They had been seeing it the last couple of months in the sky and on TV but with Lucas's telescope and Mike's binoculars they would be able to look at it a lot better.

She caught Mike enthusiasm of course, so what? Max always said he is a big nerd but maybe El was a nerd herself, and nerds gotta stick together.

"Yup!" said Mike with pride, patting his backpack. He had raised some money in the last couple of months so he could buy a really good pair of binoculars. It wasn't a telescope but he'd seen many astronomers use them and he knew those were the perfect ones to watch the comet at its best. "Are you ready, baby?"

"Yes, I'll just get my coat and my bag." answered Eleven happily and went to her room to pick up her things and the pink beanie Karen made for her with so much love.

Hopper, on the other hand, frowned and turned to look at the teenagers in his house, more specifically at Mike since his daughter was in her room taking her things.

The Chief's jaw dropped, his heart quickened with worry and shock all at once. The boy in front of him wasn't doing anything wrong, he was just looking at his girlfriend and smiling with that same love struck smile he use to tease him about but, there was something that pulled the trigger on Hopper's head. A lot of times – more than he'd tolerated in fact – he had came home from work feeling so tired and

moody only to find the happy couple making out in the floor with their homework sprawled around them and, even if it wasn't his favourite view, that night was the first time he could actually see how fast those kids were growing up. And he should be worried.

"Baby what are you doing?" asked Mike laughing, walking all the way into the cabin since he had been standing by the door and walking to El's bedroom with no second thoughts. He noticed she was struggling with her hair and decided to go help her put her beanie on; apparently her curls were making it difficult because of the humidity.

There! The boy said it again!

Hopper jolted from the couch and stared at them with his blue eyes and mouth wide opened as if those kids were a pair of weird creatures from another planet. But they weren't, they were simply kids, barely teenagers so... Could somebody explain him since when did the Wheeler boy started calling her daughter 'baby'!?

"Here, honey, hold this down and put a clip on it, yeah." Eleven was giving Mike instructions of how to make a bun with her hair and then cover it with the beanie so she could secure it with the clip on her lips.

Hopper's eyes almost fell out of his sockets. Since when did his little girl start calling the Wheeler boy 'honey'?

What...? How...? What the fuck was going on!? They were still many months away from turning fifteen years old and they already had pet names for each other!? What was next? Would they start sharing dinners, claim on tax-returns, buy a house and start planning a wedding? If they were using pet names like if they were an old married couple then, how far was really the day when those inappropriate kisses he witnessed so many times, actually begun to escalate?

Oh no. No no no, hell no! He was definitely not ready to give his daughter 'the talk' yet, no. He had barely survived when last year on a Sunday morning he had to explain the reason why she found blood in her underwear. How would he even begin to explain the things he needed to say about... about *that*? Oh God, he felt so stupid, he

couldn't even think about it.

He needed to talk to Joyce, yes! That'd help. He has to talk to Joyce, *soon!*

"There, all set! You look gorgeous." Mike said sincerely and Eleven pecked him on the lips then grabbed her bag and held onto his hand, ready to go.

"See you tomorrow, dad." she tiptoed to give him a kiss on the cheek. "Go to bed early."

"I'll take care of her, Chief, don't worry. Good night." said Mike as well as they left the cabin.

Hopper followed them to the door with a lot of questions in his head, overreacting and making way too many assumptions for just a couple pet names. He couldn't stop noticing how tall that boy got in the last couple of years, how big they were and, as they climbed onto his bike, he realize that in less than two years Mike would probably have a car. And if Eleven and Mike did the same things he used to do when he himself got a car when he turned sixteen, then... No, he should better stop thinking.

"I'll say hi to Joyce for you, dad!" said El to her father and waved at him before wrapping her arms around her boyfriend's waist.

But then Mike said something that left Hopper panicking.

"Oh didn't Will tell you, El? Joyce is out tonight so it's only the six of us. Apparently one of her cousins she hadn't seen in a while is visiting family in Indianapolis so she went to visit and she'll stay until tomorrow. Isn't it great? Besides we are teenagers now." Mike told her and she cheered too because they had never been alone in a house just the six of them and that meant they could stay up late and no one would ask to keep their voices down.

Both teenagers went into the woods and Hopper lost them from sight, remaining completely shocked with his mouth still opened since he overheard that no parent would be there to keep an eye on those kids. He could barely stop himself from going after his daughter and

bring her back to the cabin but, knowing how El would react if he told her at the last minute she wasn't allowed to go, he decided to simply trust them or he would find himself buying new windows.

That night Jim Hopper didn't get enough sleep, he just kept pondering the thought of Eleven and Mike and how they were inevitable becoming young adults so freaking fast.

"Please God; keep my daughter away from the big book of babies' names for now. Please!"

xx

The fact that there were no parents around made a big difference for the party. Of course Joyce was great and she was one of the coolest mom ever but she was a mom after all and being only the six of them, they had no one to send them to sleep early and no one came to ask the teenagers to lower their voices. Even when no one planned to bring alcohol or do inappropriate things for their age, the fact that there's was no supervision felt really nice, almost as if they were tasting what adulthood was like.

The night went by with ease like always; making jokes, eating pizza and pop corn while watching sci-fi movies and a documental about said comet and they even played a couple games too. Max kept saying every now and then how they were all just a big bunch of nerds, she even questioned how did she end up stuck with them but the boys and El simply boomed her, laughed and then Lucas leaned and kissed her only to keep her mouth shut. Besides, she was also very enthusiastic and curious about the comet, maybe not like the rest of the party who wanted to go as soon as possible and even took a peek in the sky to spot it from the distance; but they had a very pleasant evening, sharing their grandparent's stories from when they saw the comet when they were children.

Around 1 am. They all decided to sleep a bit and since there was no one else but them in the house, they decided to bring into the living room Jonathan, Joyce and Will's mattresses and build a big bed for them to share. Of course it lead to a lot of jokes and teasing from Lucas, Max and Dustin's part by insinuating which kind of activities Jonathan and Nancy did on his bed, – which pissed Mike – and then

pointing out how much fun Joyce and Hopper has on her bed – which also pissed Will and El equally –; they begun a big pillow fight and a huge footwear war, throwing each other shoes, boots and sneakers before dozing off.

It wasn't until 4:45 am that Eleven rolled a bit more on her side and rubbed her cheek on her boyfriend's chest but immediately frowned and pat the place where her arm was hugging her beloved, only to find an empty spot. She opened her eyes and realized that, indeed, there was no Mike sleeping beside her.

Fortunately she didn't need to look for him much longer since a noise in the kitchen and then footsteps were heard and she watched as Mike came back from the kitchen, apparently dressed up with a steamy cup of something in his hand. El tried to sit up and the boy noticed he wasn't the only one awake anymore.

"Sorry El, didn't mean to wake you up." said Mike in a whisper as he crouched down next to her, holding his cup of tea with both hands.

Eleven shook her head. "No, it's fine." she answered in a low voice since they didn't want to disturb their friends sleep, then she cleared her throat since she had a bit of a groggy voice. Well, how sexy. "You okay, honey? Why are you up?"

Even if there was no reason for El to worry she still did because Mike never gets up before she does because she always sleeps hugging him, almost on top of him actually, and he always held her and snuggled until she'd wake up whenever she felt like it so yeah, she got worried.

"I'm okay baby, really. Go back to sleep, it's still way too early." Mike said with a comforting smile and then he caressed her cheeks with his right hand, it was warm.

Eleven sighed against his touch and smiled at the warm sensation. Will adjusted the thermostat before they went all to bed and they had a bunch of thick, big covers and blankets but she could still feel it was cold out there, even for early April; not for nothing Hopper had to attend some car accidents given that rain still freezes into sleet last week.

She sighed again and reached to take Mike's watch on his wrist and turned the light on it to look at the hour; she also noticed he was fully dressed with boots and scarf, he only needed his hat and his mittens and he was ready to go outside apparently.

The girl took a deep breath still under Mike's gaze who was waiting for her go get back to sleep and then El removed the covers and blankets, sitting up and whimpered a bit for how cold it was outside the warmth of the bed.

"Baby, get back to sleep! It's really cold!" said Mike nervously and louder than he intended to but immediately went silent since one of his friends, probably Will, groaned in his sleep.

"Mmm... Can you get me a cup of tea, please?" asked the girl in a soft, sweet tone and got up, looking for her shoes, her pants and her sweater around the room while shivering a little.

Mike sighed and smiled at his defeat, feeling quite touched by his girlfriend's intentions to keep him company; he leaned and kissed her cheek before heading to the kitchen and pour her a nice, hot cup of tea. Once they were both dressed and cozy, Mike and Eleven stood next to the main window; he had one arm around her body and his cup on his left hand while she rested her head back against his chest and kept drinking her tea, enjoying the warmth from her cup, the boy next to her and the moment they were sharing.

"You couldn't sleep?" asked El in a whisper.

Mike shook his head. "No, I guess I'm more excited than I thought and..." he remained silent for a moment. "Never mind, it's silly."

El, of course, wouldn't let him get away with it. "Tell me." she prodded him with a tiny smile. She knew he was just being shy and maybe he needed a push.

"No, you'll think I'm, I don't know, cheesy." He said but couldn't help but grin a bit and Eleven could see his cheeks flushing, it only got her more curious.

"Mike." she whined using her sweet little baby voice and her biggest

weapon: her doe eyes. "Please, tell me?"

The boy looked at the cup in his hand for a moment, the white steam from his beverage dancing in the air illuminated by the moon glow and feeling his girlfriend's eyes on him, shining and big. He smiled, defeated once again by her sweetness and her tricks.

"I was thinking about you."

It wasn't unusual for him to be thinking about her, he is after all her loving, wonderful boyfriend but Eleven couldn't figure why she was involved with Mike's excitement about the comet or the fact that he couldn't sleep.

She didn't ask though, she knew by the look on his face and the smile on his lips as he kept drinking his tea, watching how he wasn't actually looking at her that he wasn't finished. He was struggling with the blush in his cheeks too and then he licked his full, almost red lips and continued.

"You know I love you, El, don't you?" asked Mike as if he needed to say it again. As if he needed to remind her what she knew already.

El nodded, convinced that he was telling the truth and feeling the same butterflies in her tummy like when he said it for the first time.

"I love you too, Mike." she whispered but also noticed that there was something in his mind, something weird. She caressed his arm because he was indeed acting different, gloomy. "Honey, what's wrong?"

Mike took a deep breath.

"I don't know, I guess I'm thinking a lot of things lately with this comet thing. For centuries this amazing spectacle had impressed and overwhelmed the entire world and almost no one lives to watch it twice and, even if they do, they can barely remember it because they were too little or they are way too old, but still people think about it with so much joy; and I feel funny. Is not only because we can see it now and we are able to appreciate it forever since we won't be around when it comes back; suddenly I begun to think about you

while we were resting, while you were sleeping on my chest and snoring a little." that last part he said it with the hint of a smile. She chuckled.

Mike stayed quiet for a moment and Eleven looked out the window into the dark of the night and the shadows of the forest where during a cold, horrible winter she had to hide; she remembered how cold and hungry she was since she couldn't get back to Mike's warmth because that'd put him in danger. The bitterness, the suffering and how much the snow hurt her before Hopper came to the rescue. She also thought that it was also the same forest that, during a rainy night she was also starving, cold and scared before Mike found her; but those memories didn't hurt anymore because life is good now. Because there was a new kind of warmth in her life, warmer than blankets, cups of tea and sweaters. The warmth comforting her came from the father who recently became a little too paranoid, the teenagers sleeping and snoring in the living room and, above all, from the boy who had an arm around her middle and millions of stars on his pink cheekbones.

"I was thinking about that winter when we didn't know if you were alive or dead, more specifically about the time you told me you had to wander in the forest, surrounded with snow before Hopper found you." said Mike again, his voice taking her by surprise since she got lost into her own memories. He continued. "I remember how I felt so guilty when I laughed at something and every day while living my life or, well, almost living it since, you know... I pretended to live but carrying on without you was agonizing to say the least."

El stared at him, she could see the pain behind his words and how those days still fell heavy on his shoulders. The time he called her, those days that even if they were a huge act of love, it was also a torture.

"Before you got trapped in the upside down when I told you we could go to the Snowball together and when I said you could stay in my house, I really meant it. You know now that I do but back then, I really truly meant it. Sure I hadn't consider how would I explain my parents that 'hey, I found a girl and I wanna keep her', but I think I felt too optimistic to believe otherwise. There were times when I watched you sleep in the fort and I kept thinking that, when it's all

over, there was a life waiting for us. I kept planning all sort of adventures with you but then everything happened and I thought I lost you forever. That was why I couldn't sleep tonight."

He stopped for a moment and he seemed like he needed a minute. El understood and she placed her right hand on his chest where his heart is.

"Mike you don't have to talk about it if you don't want to." she whispered feeling unbelievable guilty for pushing him into telling her what kept him awake.

He shook his head and then leaned to kiss her forehead.

"It's okay, baby." his voice was so soft. "I started thinking about those nights when I called you, how I couldn't stop thinking about you and how many times I wondered where you could possibly be. I went out to the forest many times looking for you because I just couldn't believe you were dead, baby, I just couldn't. All I had in mind during those days was how cute you looked while sleeping and how unimaginable guilty I felt because I couldn't take you to the dance or to the lake, to eat ice cream and all those things I planned for us to do and for you to discover beside me." Mike had his heart in his throat, beating fast and hard pushing his tears out of his eyes.

"And now while you were sleeping, El, while you had your arm around me and you rubbed your cheek against my chest; when you purred in your sleep when I played with your hair... My God, I felt terrified, just like I felt back then because now I can't live without you. I barely lived back then but now I know I can't and I don't wanna live if something happens to you. I just wouldn't be able to survive without your arms around me or without you lying next to me while sleeping or drinking your tea. I wouldn't be able to keep breathing if I can't teach you math or if I can't tell you about the stars above us because the life we have now, the life you have is exactly what I dreamt for you and what I thought for almost a year that I couldn't give to you." his voice was trembling but he kept on going. "I felt so scared of loosing you again and also felt this immeasurable joy that we are going to see this wonderful comet together, I am simply so happy because I can spend so many hours talking to you about science and constellations because this is something I yearn to

experience with my friends and now, since you came into my life, with you as well."

Mike cleaned his tears and got a bit angry at himself because he didn't want to cry; because this night was supposed to be a great night not a sad one. All the things that happened were in the past now, it shouldn't matter. She is with him and he is with her.

"Baby you lived so many years as a prisoner that what I wanted the most, what I want the most is to give you all of the experiences that were taken away from you. For me to be able to stand besides you as we witness this great spectacle means everything. You told me that I gave you the stars by telling you all about them or when I gave you the stickers for your room but truth is, you worth every hour I spent in the library learning more about them so I can keep telling you about every star and every planet. Maybe we are made of star stuff like we learned in COSMOS but, I can only exist because of you; because you, El are the only star that shines for me."

When Mike finished, El didn't know if she should smile or cry; he also seemed like he couldn't even look at her, probably too overwhelmed by his confession. Eleven asked him what he had in mind and not only he complied but it seems like he'd needed to say all of that since God knows how long.

While Mike was looking out of the window, Eleven couldn't stop staring at him. She couldn't explain just how much she loves him and how, with with a couple of words and a cup of tea in his hands and barely looking at her every now and then, he could shine like a supernova, leaving her completely dazzled by the glow pouring out of him.

There was no doubt that Mike earned every bit of her love; since the moment she set eyes on him even if she found out later on what her feelings were, even when Hopper kept saying even nowadays that they were still kids. No, this love isn't a crush or a puppy love, this is so much more. Is the full extension of the entire cosmos that exploded and evolved so it can create a wonderful boy beyond words or imagination; a boy who loves her more than anyone in every single universe that may or may not exist.

If she is his star the Eleven felt exactly the same way. Mike is her private universe in which she lived in; her home, the only one she needed so she could keep breathing.

El's hand on his chest grabbed his coat and he looked at her. Her eyes were watery and her cheeks were pink, her lips trembling. Was she upset? Was she happy?

"I'm sorry, El, I didn't mean to upset you, just—"

"Shut up and kiss me." she whispered and pulled him down enough so their lips met and their kiss lingered; she never wanted to let him go.

In each other's lips they find their centre and fly to the vastness of eternity. Their brain cells collapsing and shining, the adrenaline running up and down in their bodies and then rushing to meet a pair of lips kissing, a tongue caressing its way inside until it became a full passionate kiss; their love radiating warmth just so real as the moon in the dark sky and the sun coming out in a couple of hours. They knew they could last forever.

Suddenly Eleven had a thought while Mike was welcomed inside her mouth; she thought about the flashes of lights inside the nebulas. She knew those flashes of lights were all thousands of dying stars and that they explode so they could also create new life, because they were alive because they were made of star stuff; so if they were actually made of that, then Eleven knew she would live and die even after the end of times so she could always reborn to meet and fall in love with Mike in every planet, in every life form and every universe with its many dimensions.

Because he is her only one. If he says Eleven is his star, then she believes Mike is her nebula because she was born again thanks to him, because he is her home in every way and not only a figure of speech.

But no matter how eternal their love could be or how sweet and addictive their kisses might be, they unfortunately had to pull apart when Dustin's alarm clock woke him up at 5:15 am. and he got up from bed almost instantly. They knew Dusty is a morning person but come on, he was snoring a second ego. El was impressed and a little

jealous.

The boy got up from bed in his pyjamas and wandered around the room looking for his clothes too and then noticed Mike and El were already up and fully dressed and, probably because he had just woken up his mind couldn't process that situation and make a dirty comment like he normally does; instead of making a joke he simply smiled and gave both a thumbs up.

"That's the spirit guys!" he said and begun to dress. Dustin didn't whisper like they had been doing, instead he started yelling and clapping his hands, making as much noise as possible. "Come on, people, come on! Wake up or we won't get there in time, come on!"

He didn't even watch his step, if he kicked or stood on someone then better yet. He was too excited and they were on a schedule.

"Uhhh..." Eleven tried to tell him to keep it down because they had time enough but Mike gestured for her to say nothing because that was a lot more funny.

"Wake the fuck up, I said!" yelled Dustin again, grabbing some shoes and threw them at Lucas who was peacefully sleeping between Max and Will until a shoe hit his chest. "Max, Lucas, Will, come on!" he continued screaming, taking their blankets off and pulling the boys by their ankles.

Both Mike and El couldn't stop laughing but when Lucas threw another shoe in Dustin's direction, they decided to move to another room if they didn't want to participate in another foot-wear battle.

"Guys, prepare some coffee and fill our thermos, okay?" Dustin asked with a lot more kindness since they were already up and ready to go; his enthusiasm and excitement make them feel happy too.

They nodded and went to kitchen to prepare coffee as requested, but also because Dustin was now standing in the mattress trying to get the rest of the party up already; they were growling and complaining while he begun singing and shouting, slapping and kicking all three teenagers.

Luckily Mike and El were pouring coffee safely in the kitchen when they heard the shoe battle starting again.

xx

It was really cold. Hopper actually pretended for Mike to bike all the way to the cabin and then come back to Will's house with that temperature and frozen roads? The highest trees still had snow and the morning dew made the streets and frost grass slippery since it was freezing. No, her dad was crazy if he thought she would jeopardize Mike's health and safety.

All six teenagers were tightly bundled from head to toes with thick pants, waterproof coats, heavy boots, sweaters, hats and warm gloves and socks. At 5:35 am they begun their walk to the quarry, it was still dark but they chose to go walking since they figure it'd help them warm up. When they arrived to their destiny only ten minutes later they still had an hour and a half until dawn and high in the sky, shining beautifully they spotted the wonderful shape of Halley.

It was clear and visible without the telescope and binoculars; it's shape so perfectly drawn in that blue almost black sky, making it so much prettier, so unforgettable and they shivered from excitement because as the sun started to come out they would be able to see it better than how they were looking at it in that moment. It was a once in a life time opportunity, an amazing experience in any way and everyone went silent for a moment, taking in its beauty and how it was travelling at such ridiculous speed even when it looked like it was sitting still.

"This is definitely the best view." said Dustin after a moment. His breath made a big cloud with the low temperature of 33°F.

"I know, man." agreed Lucas. They have been watching the comet during the last couple f months from different spots but they waited until that day and that time because they would find it at his best location. He thought that if he squinted his eyes, he could see where the tail begins, although it was probably his imagination. He turned to his girlfriend. "What do you think, babe?"

But Max was far from being happy or excited; her nose and her

cheeks were as red as her hair even when she had half her face hidden under her scarf. The look she gave Lucas was far from romantic.

"I think I hate you, stalker. I'm just so cold!" said the girl, shivering from head to toes.

Lucas snickered, he couldn't help it. "Sorry, babe. Come here." he opened his arms and she snuggled in his chest, sighing in relief when his warmth gave her peace; the warmth he can always give her that had nothing to do with coats or gloves. Yet she would never admit it.

"Hey losers, put that telescope in place. I wanna see the comet and it better look as amazing as you said." Max ordered and she pushed one of her legs, kicking the person closer to both of them.

"Dude!" Dustin complained, cleaning her footprint from his leg. "It's your boyfriend's telescope, he should do it."

"No, Lucas is busy." answered the red haired girl, her voice muffled since she was buried in her boyfriend's chest.

Lucas was more than happy, usually Max isn't this affectionate when there's people around so he would enjoy as much as he could, and if she wanted him to be her human heater, then he'd comply.

"I'll help you. Besides I don't think we can count on Mike either." said Will with a smile and he pointed at his two friends in the same situation as the other happy, frozen couple.

Dustin paid attention to their friends in love and, for a moment, he wished he'd have someone who wants to snuggle with him during the cold seasons. He sighed and tried to focus on the comet since it was a much prettier subject. When they assembled the telescope they fought about who gets to see the comet first since Max tried to be the first one saying it was her boyfriend's and Dustin saying she didn't do anything in the first place.

In the end Will was the first one, then Lucas, Eleven, Mike and after a 'rock, paper, scissors' battle, Dustin and finally Max.

When the sky slowly went from black to a lighter blue and dawn was

getting closer by the minute, the party begun to take turns with the telescope and binoculars as Halley started shining beautifully before them; it really was a unique event and waking up with the cold weather was definitely worth it.

A master piece since creation, everything that must have happened for a little piece of the moment when the universe came together now shining and visiting their atmosphere as it have been doing since centuries every 76 six years. The Sun heating its surface and a mixture of gas, dust and ice creating a beautiful tail like a bride would show a veil; it was a magnificent, wonderful scientific spectacle.

"Shit, he is so unbelievable gorgeous!" Dustin said, it was his turn on the telescope and he was practically wiping from the comet's beauty.

"He? I always thought the comet is a 'she'." replied Will and Lucas nodded since he agrees with him.

"Yeah, I too believe is a she." Max was the one on the telescope after Dustin and then she let Eleven take her place.

"But it isn't a she because Halley was a man, so the comet is male." Dusty said again, a part of him wondering why were they arguing about the comet's gender.

"Besides even if he wasn't the one who discovered the comet, it's name after him because it was with Newton's help that Edmund Halley discovered its orbit within the Oort cloud and predicted its periodicity. Thanks to him people stopped believing that the comet brought or announced disasters like people believed." Mike replied when El let him use the telescope, he smiled at the view.

"But is Halley's Comet and Halley is a girl's name, isn't it?" claimed Will again, although he begun to wonder if it was strictly a girl's name. He only heard it on girls but maybe guys can be named that way too.

After that the conversation went from science stuff to which names can be used for boy and girls, besides it was too cold to start fighting about which gender or sex does a gigantic piece of rock has. Truth is

no matter if it was a he or a she, it was a beautiful so, who cares in the end?

A couple of minutes later as the dawn fell upon them, Mike used the binoculars and felt Eleven's arms holding him by the middle, maybe because she was still sleepy or maybe because she was a bit cold; maybe both.

"What do you think, baby?" he asked with a big smile. His full lips looked almost red because of the cold weather against his pale skin and they looked even more delicious with the chap stick she put on him against his will.

Mike complained about the cold hurting his gorgeous lips but since he was afraid the party would mock him if he put on chap stick, El stepped up, put a lot of chap stick on her lips and kissed him fiercely. Besides Mike's lips belong to her and it was her job to protect them.

"I think it's a girl." El replied while looking at the comet which was a lot more visibly with naked eye during dawn before sunrise; she sighed and buried her face on Mike's chest, breathing him in and thinking about all those things he said not so long ago. Because she now understood how important it was for Mike to witness that moment together. El smiled. "I like Halley, is a pretty name."

"Yeah it is, maybe when you and I have a daughter we can name her like that, if you want." said Mike as naturally as if he just sneezed and realized what he said only when he heard his girlfriend's gasp.

She indeed gasped loud since Mike took her completely out of guard and Eleven felt her cheeks blushing before she could help it. She couldn't help to notice how his cheeks turned pink too, probably a side effect of his own words and not the cool temperature.

"Oh crap, I mean... I wasn't assuming that you, I mean only if you want to..."

But Eleven smiled so warmly, so sweetly taking the binoculars from his hands and looking at the comet that Mike not only relaxed, but also felt very weak on his knees. He sighed in relief since she understood he sometimes speaks faster than he thinks and El smiled

because she knew now that Mike really meant it, that just as he planned this day a long time ago, he was also planning a future by her side too.

So impossibly cute, so superbly unique.

El had her eyes fix on the comet when she spoke again. "I'd love to, Mike."

Now he gasped. "R-really?"

She nodded and sighed, taking in the lasts minutes of the comet before the sun hides it until sunset. She felt bewildered by its beauty and, for a moment, El realized she wasn't just seeing a comet, but also their future.

"Halley Wheeler, I like the sound of that." whispered Eleven; her cheeks red and her smile so bright. She passed the binoculars to Mike but he let her used them.

He felt just so madly, unquestionably in love that he was also seeing their future too.

Mike wrapped his arms around her waist and hugged her from behind and kissed her beanie covered head, sniffing her cherry shampoo through the wool.

"I like it too." Mike whispered before placing a soft kiss on her cheek and went back to her beanie, thankful that she couldn't see the blush on his cheeks or that big, dopey, love struck grin.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hello everyone! So as mentioned, this story has a lot research, (like I actually put an add on internet so I could interview people who lived in Indiana during 1986 and they told me how the comet looked and how cold it was even for April). Yeah, I take my writing seriously.

INFO: *The article Dustin read is an actual article from that year about what astronomers gauged and predicted since 1978. After that, Giotto and Vega missions presented the actual size and peanut shape of the comet; despite the vast size of its tail, Halley's nucleus is actually small. For more*

information, there's Google.

Well, I am sorry this wasn't uploaded before but a) I was on vacation; b) It took longer than expected; c) I was hoping more reviews and also for you guys to vote about what chapter you want next. Let's hope next one doesn't take this long and please help me decide with the chapters set below.

: MINE - 1984

: DANCE WITH ME - 2006

: LEMONADE - 1988

: WHY ME? - 1997

: EVERY DAY, EVERY HOUR - 1989

: PROMISE - 1993

: MY GIRL - 1993

: PRIORITIES - 1990

: THE ONLY ONE - 2007

: YOU - 1984

: A LITTLE FREEDOM – 1984

This chapter is a Valentine's Day/my birthday present for you guys so, Happy everything, I love you all and **please tell me what you thought with a review**. If I take too long, you can scold me on my insta account celes_genesis.

Until next chapter!

10. Mine

[A/N: Hi guys, I know its been forever, I'll explain what happened later. I just wanted to tell you that, since season three comes in five days its obvious that the chapters yet to come and the rest of my other story TAKE MY HAND will be published after season three. Given that we might get info that can change a couple things, from now on the chapters in this WEIRD STUFF series and the upcoming chapters of TAKE MY HAND will happened all Post Season 2 and Pre Season 3. **IF** I can change something from the initial idea for the one-shot to adapt it on what we learn in s3, then that story will be published in a new multichapter, if not it'll still be published here. **TAKE MY HAND** takes place many years later so as long as there's Mileven it can be either be post or pre season 3, I don't know. But for the time being please enjoy this chapter, I worked really hard on it. Now, enjoy.]

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Rated: K+. / Romance - Friendship. / (Eleven & Mike), Dustin, Will, Lucas, Max, Nancy.

xx

MINE

December 15th, 1984.

As the song faded away, Mike and Eleven knew that, even when it was ending, that sweet melody would last forever just like that moment.

A glimpse of eternity; a moment that had been stolen from them for almost a year and a kiss tickling their lips – and by which they couldn't stop smiling. A kiss like the one a scared, nervous kid gave her on a scary and tragic night, taking her by surprise as she didn't know what it was but when she did, she yearn for them to kiss again. The kiss they almost shared a month ago before Hopper interrupted them; a kiss that finally came, a kiss they shared because, this time,

Eleven kissed him back.

How long have they been waiting for it? Mike called her for three hundred and fifty three days, holding against pain and fighting his every day reality he never wanted to accept. He called her every night to let her know he was there, to tell her about the feelings he couldn't dare to share with anybody else; feelings beyond friendship he wouldn't deny and those deep, pure wishes that had flourished as a celestial command because he needed her without thinking twice and adored her with no questions asked. He needed her, he missed her, he had promised a life with her only for it to be taken away but now she is back, now Eleven is there with him.

Michael Wheeler, President of Hawkins Middle AV Club, nerd for everyone who knows him, frog face for every moron in school and trouble boy for his parents since last year, he wasn't himself since she faded away but now he was finally awake from the nightmare he had been living every day and from which he escaped every night when he saw El in his dreams. Those dreams became what he craved for every single moment because in those dreams she came back to him. For almost a year every aspect in his everyday routine stabbed him in the back when he went down the basement only to find she wasn't there; when he lived his life, when he ate his breakfast or went to school wondering if Eleven had even eaten that day or if she had a bed to sleep in, or if she was even alive. Those dreams were his refugee, they had given him something to look for, a moment of temporary insanity where he saw himself in the basement and she was listening to him. Those dreams gave him hope as they whispered *'Come on, hang on just a little bit more because she's out there and she needs you'* and Mike gathered his strength because he truly believed she'd be back one day and therefore he'd be back too. He would come back to his happy self, to laugh again, to eat again and this time he'd be holding her hand because she would also bring him back to life.

Mike could feel Eleven's blush and how she felt so shy she wouldn't even look at him. It didn't matter; everything was perfect because he was holding her waist and moving along with a melody still playing in their heads as the world around them came back to them.

Meanwhile, as Mike felt as happy as never before, Eleven felt like if she was in heaven.

Hopper kept telling her during the entire trip to the dance it will only be for two hours, that they were taking a huge risk. *'Hey kid, listen I'm serious. Just two hours and we have to get back'* he said for the tenth time while she fixed her hair she never wore that way before and checking on those pretty colours Joyce put on her eyes and her lips. Her heart fluttering and beating as fast as it could while she jumped on her seat thinking about the beautiful boy she was going to see. The boy that had given everything to her, the boy who's name echoed in her ears; the boy who meant dreams come true, the stars in the sky and a bright, shiny future for them to share.

How would she explain to Hopper the gigantic smile on her face? Because she knew she wouldn't stop smiling, because her cheeks almost hurt from how happy she felt, how wonderful she felt. Her brand-new father told her she could only attend for two hours, that she had to understand and, for now, she must settle for a compromise and try to resist once again being half-way-happy. But no, she wasn't half-way-happy because having Mike with her resting his forehead against her own, having his hands on her waist while she wore a pretty dress as they danced on the Snowball he told her about last year; having his eyelashes caressing her skin and a song that burned its way through their hearts, all of that meant she was completely, stupidly, wonderfully, amazingly happy.

Happy from the root of every new hair on her head to the tip of her toes. Happy because during a scary and dreadful night after escaping from hell itself, three wonderful boys who were looking for a friend they loved found her by accident and she finally saw the light; a light coming not only from a flashlight but from a pair of brown chocolate eyes of a boy who turned into a beautiful teenager; the one who took off his jacket, place it on her shoulders and guided her to his bike giving her the salvation she had been pleading her entire life for.

Happy because during those endless and boring days watching soap operas that unwillingly became an addiction, she learned that that new and weird thing Mike did with his mouth was called 'kiss' and that... Uff, that meant so much more than she could have possibly imagined. Someway she found herself replaying that kiss in her head and wondering how it would be to re-live that moment and share with him kisses like the ones she saw on TV. She was happy because

she finally had the chance to kiss him, like they just did.

How can Eleven explain the overwhelming need to laugh, jump and cry out of happiness all because she had Mike in her arms and a big grin on their lips?

Because Eleven doesn't know many words yet; because sometimes she needs to ask about what to say or how to say it and think hard to find a right way to express what she wants, but she does know that her feelings for Mike had only one word. A tiny word which turns her stomach and plays with the million butterflies living inside her because Mike and that tiny word, both have only four little letters and yet they mean so, so much more.

Love.

They could taste it in the back of their tongues as they played with the word in their minds, travelling from every single part of their brains, flying right through the heart and fit like a puzzle piece so they could finally feel complete.

None of them had even dared to put a name into their feelings during the time they weren't together because it would have only made those days harder. They dreamt about each other, they called and visit each other, they cried over each other; they even felt each other's presence when the need to hug, support, and see one another and never let go was so heavy it stabbed them in the heart along with their torturous reality. It was hard, it was unbelievable hard because they knew, because they saw what they did to one another from the moment their eyes locked. A feeling so powerful which seeded during that rainy night, a feeling so strong it sprouted during that adventurous week, a feeling so sweet it blossomed during a stolen first kiss and then that feeling simply flourished during those lonely days and horrible nights when tears brought back their gorgeous eyes and how they desperately needed to be together. But then, facing or even putting a name to what they felt during those dark, lonely days was beyond their own strength because saying that their friendship grew into something that deep was like crushing their hearts in the worst possible way.

But that was then; now they could finally say it. Now the single

thought that those feelings were possible, something they could sense in the air, reach with their hands and hold in their arms, all of that gave both Mike and Eleven the necessary courage to face and yell to the entire world: *Yes, here it is, this is love.*

"El?"

His voice pulled her out from her thoughts but not from what she felt. They weren't dancing anymore but she could feel their world swaying into a calming peace like if they were dancing on a cloud and billions of colours and all kinds of dreams brought her joy, love and safety all thanks to the boy with the prettiest freckles and sweetest lips.

"Hm?"

Closed eyes, foreheads touching, big smiles, their chests so close they could feel each other's hearts, Eleven playing with the hairs on Mike's nape as he rubbed his thumb on the belt around her waist, she felt butterflies fluttering in her stomach because she knew what he wanted to say. She just knew.

"Can I kiss you again?"

Eleven smiled; she knew he was going to ask her that as if he needed her permission, as if she didn't spend every night thinking about kissing him for the rest of their lives.

She nodded but couldn't dare to look at him because the warmth on her cheeks was overwhelming and the knot of happiness inside her chest too big to even speak. She felt breathless and yet she still needed Mike's kiss more than she needed air.

Slowly and almost without moving from the way they were, Mike leaned down and tilted his head in which it seemed like an eternity and Eleven could appreciate how careful he was, as if he needed to be, as if she would move anyway that wasn't his lips. But she loved that, it gave her the chance to take note of their noses touching and how she instinctively tilted her head up to meet him as Mike spread his lips and Eleven noticed for the first or the tenth time that day how pink, soft and beautiful they were; and he knew exactly how to

kiss her when their lips finally meet.

This time they stayed there; this time it lingered.

It was a chaste, tender kiss and their lips connected in a way it stopped the time, the entire world around them and every existing life on the planet. The only thing they could feel was the warmth they gave to each other; Eleven's arms pulling him down her level, hugging him tight and Mike clinging on her by the waist in a way that no one could deny that those kids had fallen deep and hard for each other. That second kiss of the night was also a first kiss and every single one they'd share would also be because Mike did not intend to stop kissing her if she allows him to and Eleven have no objection whatsoever; if Hopper told her she had only two hours then she'd spend every single minute on the lips of the boy she loves.

That moment they were sharing felt like a magical spot between hope and every dream becoming true; they sighed in their kiss feeling content and filled as they tried to deepen their kiss until they were abruptly interrupted by someone's loud scream.

"Oh my God, your first kiss!" Nancy's voice came to them so suddenly it forced them to break apart, stealing their special moment and the special touch they were enjoying so much. The seventeen year old girl walked towards them with a big blush and covering her mouth – a bit too late for that – as she came closer to the young teenagers embracing, behind her Dustin was grinning at them and Mike wanted to slap him before he could say anything.

But instead of slapping him, Mike smiled; he smiled because of Nancy's excitement, because of Dustin's dopey grin even if it meant hearing some inappropriate – and awesome – joke at his own expense and most of all because he knew that not only his friend but the entire party were aware of how much Mike had been waiting for the kiss him and Eleven shared; but then when El shifted and hid her face in the crook of his neck, probably feeling shy and cute as hell, Mike's smile did nothing but keep growing because he also felt her own beautiful smile as she breathed him in.

Happy, he was unrealistically happy.

"I can't believe it, Mike. I witnessed your first kiss!" said Nancy again now standing right in front of them and noticing how Eleven, that brave innocent girl hugged her younger brother, finding shelter on the crook of his neck. Nancy had already noticed that when El came to save their lives at the Byers house and when her brother and that girl saw and hugged each other that something was going on. It was so clear back in that moment and now adding that beautiful kiss, that her little brother who kept growing up and that tender, brave girl created a bond for all eternity.

That girl who was becoming a teenager and blushing so much that her ears were practically red, was hiding her own gaze from her and yet Nancy realized she had never seen the big picture until now; something so cute, so real.

The ease in which her younger brother hugged that girl overwhelmed Nancy. There he was, the little boy, the one with whom Nancy fights all the time but also loves no matter what, the same boy that when he was only one year old gave his sister his first word was so grown up that made Nancy go through every one of their childhood memories as reality fell upon her that her little brother wasn't a kid anymore. Somehow that little boy who once looked at her with big eyes from his cradle and called her name for the first time was now standing in there, looking so tall and handsome as he kept growing up to become a wonderful young man and it was then that Nancy noticed some sort of glow around her kid brother that she hadn't seen for a long time. She noticed that as if it was a revelation that Mike wasn't the same and then when Eleven came back and they had the chance to witness their encounter, that boy was eating properly again, laughing again and living as if every day was a new gift and all of that made Nancy realize that what she saw, that that kiss she just interrupted was simply the world getting back to normal. It was what it should be and nothing more.

The way in which Mike simply stood there, a hand in his pocket and another on Eleven's waist with no second thought; the way in which he was barely looking at his sister in the eye probably because he was terribly embarrassed – was also the cutest thing she had ever seen because at the same time Mike couldn't stop smiling in Eleven's arms. And she was also so sweet, Nancy thought, because that little girl

who suffered some horrible things was becoming a gorgeous woman with a normal life ahead and that meant kissing Mike on school dances, hugging him for a very long time and placing on him her entire trust because she knew that in his arms she would always be safe. Because that's her personal home, the one with whom she belonged and Nancy saw that she had never seen people loving each other so deeply, so fiercely and so naturally like these two teenagers do.

Made for each other, meant to be. Her baby brother and the weird girl she barely knew who had been apart for almost a year after spending together an entire week, it all created this unbreakable bond that Nancy swore would always protect just like she did when Mike was born.

"Hi Eleven, you look really pretty." said the older teenager with a smile as she paid closer attention to that new relationship flourishing. Mike caressing her back and whispering something only the girl could hear, making Eleven look at Nancy and smile at her.

"Thank you, Nancy. You look really pretty too." said the girl in a low, shy voice and then, just like that, she hid her face on Mike's neck again and that simple action, the way she caressed Mike's shoulder and smiled against his skin showed Nancy that she wasn't hiding from her but actually she was breathing him in. She was filling with him right in front of her.

How deep and meaningful was their bond? She didn't know but it was so obvious that they took their new relationship seriously; she noticed they could show their love with simple, innocent touches and how they looked for each other as they hugged.

Was it love? Nancy believed it was.

She nodded. "Okay, kids, I must get back to my spot. Have fun." she waved at them and let that cute couple alone because that was *their* moment and she didn't want to impose.

Unfortunately not everyone is as subtle and polite as her and Dustin decided to stay right there, smiling at them in a very mischievous way and Mike chose to give his friend a smile instead of slapping

him.

"Well, well, well. What do we have here?"

"Come on, man, don't start." Mike pleaded.

Yet Eleven felt a lot more comfortable around Dustin and she smiled at him, not letting Mike's embrace of course.

"Hi Dustin." she waved with a cute smile showing her dimples. He smiled back.

"My lady." he bowed at her and took off an imaginary hat which made her giggle. "I see Hopper brought you after all."

Both Mike and Eleven opened their eyes in shock as Will and Lucas joined them and smiled at her when they noticed she was also there.

"Hey, she came!"

"Awesome, I knew the Chief would come around."

"Hey, whoa, wait a minute." said Mike to his friends. "You... You guys knew she was coming?" he didn't ask Eleven since she looked as surprised as himself.

The guys rolled their eyes and couldn't help but laugh.

"Pff obviously! Why would you think we insist that you came too? It was all planned." revealed Lucas with pride since it was his plan, it was like when they present a great project that ends up winning on science fairs. "The Chief asked us to buy her ticket but he wasn't so convinced so we talked to him."

"Yeah, Hopper came the other day to my house to check on us and he asked me when the dance was since El mentioned it non-stop for almost a year." Will added and then looked at Eleven. "Right, El?"

The teenager felt the heat crawling to her cheeks so fast she couldn't hide it, specially since her first reaction was hiding on Mike's chest but it was also from him she wanted to hide, suddenly too conscious of her feelings for him; yet she couldn't deny what Will said. It was

the truth; she had spent every single day telling Hopper about the dance they promised each other to go, about everything Mike planned for her and how much she wanted to share with him. Sometimes Hopper even asked her to stop talking about the boy or she'll cause him diabetes...whatever that is.

Nevertheless she felt too awkward and too shy to simply admit that entire but she also knew that friends don't lie so she chose to look down at her feet and bit his lip until Mike gave her a little squeeze on her waist and she looked up at him, meeting his eyes. Those sweet, understanding eyes and that beautiful smile; that sweet look from a boy who understood her, who would never think she is weird.

She nodded in response, and when his smile grew she could barely resist the urge to kiss him again.

"Wow, I'm so flattered." whispered Mike, his minty breath made her shiver.

Even if those too were extremely corny and the way they looked at each other made people feel a little uncomfortable, Will, Lucas and Dustin felt a weird sense of happiness and a bubbling feeling on their bellies when Mike and El smiled at each other. It wasn't just seeing the little girl who helped them now finally living like a normal kid or, in Will's case seeing the girl who rescued him without even knowing him; seeing them both that happy meant seeing Mike coming back to life.

For almost a year their friend, their best friend was so moody, so sad, so cranky and so 'not there'. He wasn't even the shadow of the happy boy who leads the party, who put lots of effort as the Dungeons Master, who joked with them all the time. He had been so lost, so different and so sad that they often felt like giving up on him but when Dustin came one day telling Lucas and Will that Mike called Eleven every single night as he put his hopes and his heart on the edge of sanity, holding to a miracle as he pleaded for her to be safe and alive; all three of them realized that their friend hadn't change, he simply vanished as well.

Mike became an empty shell shaped as the boy he once was. A hollow boy filled with broken pieces of himself that couldn't rebuild

because both reason and love had crushed and hit him so hard when he met her but then, when she was taken away from him, all his dreams disappeared as well. But that was before; now not only Eleven was back but also Mike's authentic smile, his many jokes, his many games and the friend who always supported them. The love they felt for their friend was what helped them resist his bad mood, his terrible temper and it was also for him that they secretly plotted an encounter between those two; all because they loved him, all because they spent a year picking up the pieces of their best friend and now those pieces were finally healing thanks to the girl holding him, the girl he just kissed.

And it was just so sweet but they better cut off with all that sweetness or they will need an appointment with their dentist; luckily Max joined them bringing a cup of punch for her and Lucas.

"Hey stalker, here. I brought you some punch because I'm that nice." said the girl and just then she noticed the other girl standing on that blue dress. "Oh Eleven, hi. I didn't know you were coming!"

Even if Dustin and Lucas witnessed that night how rude El behaved with Max, it was the first time Mike and Will saw it with their own eyes.

Eleven not only didn't answer to Max's greeting but she also went suddenly so serious that the party wondered how a girl as cute as her could have such a scary stare. Her answer was reaching for Mike's hand and clinging on his arm with the other, as if she wanted to make herself clear that no one else but her had permission to touch him because he is *hers*; she had her eyes locked on Max's, she didn't even blinked once.

A clear message: If she ever wants to take him away from her, then she better be fucking ready to fight her.

Luckily for everyone and in order to keep Max alive, the boys decided to step up.

"Ok, uhm, I better get something to drink myself. Mike, come here." said Dustin, placing a friendly hand on Mike's shoulder and looking at the girl next to him. "Hey El, may I borrow your boyfriend for a

second?"

Both Mike and El gasped at Dustin's words but Will step up too, taking the girl's hand and pulling her away from his friend.

"Come here El, dance with me." Will said. "Hey guys, bring us some punch, alright?"

Dustin nodded, taking Mike with him and gave Lucas a meaningful look. He understood and nodded, placing a hand on Max's waist.

"Why are you smiling, stalker?" asked Max when they were left alone. "I don't get why she hates me so much."

Lucas smiled at her. "Don't worry Madmax; Dustin and Will are about to take care of everything. Come on; let's go with Jonathan for a picture."

x

Everything was so nice, so upbeat.

When they were driving there, Eleven felt a mix of happiness, nerves and anxiety; happiness because she would see Mike again, nerves because they had waited so long for their dream date and anxiety because she didn't really know what to expect. When she stepped inside she was overwhelmed and scared for the crazy amount of people, the way all the other teenagers were looking at her only to ignore her which was actually a good thing since no one seemed to notice how different she was and then, when El found Mike, she forgot about everyone else.

Now, as Mike and Dustin went to have some punch – whatever that was – and she started dancing with Will, she could take a better look to where they were and how pretty it looked. The different clothes from the kids around them, the way those girls had their hair and the separate group of kids just having fun, completely unaware of the things she and her friends have done to keep that town and the world safe. But she shouldn't think about that; it was all behind them, for now she only needed to enjoy every minute and keep dancing with Will who was jumping, shaking and twirling her.

"Is this also dancing?" she asked in between giggles.

Will shook his head. "I don't know, is the first time we come but Jonathan told me to dance as I wish and feel comfortable."

"Is he a good dancer?"

"Pff, no." Will snorted and El laughed. "But I guess is all about having fun no matter what."

They kept moving at Cindy Lauper's rhythm as Eleven looked at the way the gym was decorated. Those shiny curtains and glittery snowflakes hanging from the ceiling and that light blue sign in the back. So different from the first time she was there.

"Hey El." said Will, pulling her out of her thoughts. "We are becoming friends, aren't we? I mean you and me."

El looked at him in the eye and nodded; even if she barely knew him, she also felt like they had a strong connection.

"Yes, we are friends."

Will nodded. "Cool, so if we are friend then, can I ask you something?"

"Sure, Will."

The boy smiled, gave her a twirl and then another as they danced, getting her to laugh so he could get her on the best possible mood.

"Why you hate Max?" he blurted out of nowhere.

El stopped moving immediately, as if someone had punched her in the stomach and the air was sucked out of her lungs. She didn't want to answer; she looked down at her feet and bit her lip, a clear sign of how uncomfortable she felt and tried really hard not to look at him. Will insisted, squeezed her hands a bit so she would look at him. Warm green eyes, understanding eyes inviting her to trust. She loves Mike but she felt better that it was Will the one who asked that because if she had to tell Mike the truth she knew she would probably faint.

"El?"

Her response came as fast as a sneeze. "Because she wants to take Mike away from me."

Now it was Will who felt as if he just got punched.

"W-what?"

El looked around them, making sure nor Mike or any of their friends were anywhere near. She stepped forward, getting closer to Will and since the fast song ended and a slow song begun, it allowed them to speak softly and yet make sure he would listen.

"Mike. I know she wants him." El said as serious as a heart attack. "I... I like Mike, you know? I like Mike as in more than a friend, in the kissing way." she whispered, unable to hold his gaze and blushing deep red.

She practiced that confession for so long in front of the mirror that it felt good to be able to say it out loud, even if it wasn't to Mike himself. She wanted to, she was just really really nervous.

"Well, I think we noticed." Will said and laughed almost immediately which shocked El.

How did they know?

"I...Uhm..."

"I saw you guys before, right before Nancy interrupted, you know? We saw you guys kissing and I don't know why but something tells me you guys kissed before, right?"

His eyes sparkled and he beamed, as if he knew a lot more and it made her feel confident, like she could share anything with him. As if he was...family.

El smiled. "It was our third kiss."

Will was very surprised, in a good way. "Wait, really? Ha, look at Mike!"

"Where?" El gasped, looking for Mike and a bit scared he might have heard about her insecurities. Will caught her attention again.

"No no, it's just a figure of speech, never mind." said the boy between giggles, sometimes he forgets she is still learning how to communicate. "So three kisses, huh? Well, if you ever wondered if Mike feels the same way about you, I believe you just found your answer." he said and pushed the buttons a bit more, he wanted to know a little bit more. "I'm sorry El but if you and Mike like each other the way you do, I just don't understand what Max has to do with everything. Why do you think she wants to steal him away?"

Despite of feeling comfortable with Will the fact that the other's girls name came back to their conversation bothered her. She felt so insecure, so angry; it annoyed her so much that she could spent so many hours with the boys as a member of the party, that she could go to school with them and see them everyday when she could only see them once since she closed the gate. She hated that Hopper didn't let them go visit her and all she could do was write letters to Mike and give them to Hopper so he could give those to Joyce and she could give them to Will who delivered them to Mike and vice versa. But Max? She never need to do all that; she had it easy and she only needed to reach for him if she wanted to touch him, whirling her beautiful long hair and showing off her skills on that flat board with wheels.

But saying what she saw went she broke Hopper's rules meant admitting she used her powers against her and, even if she knew she had to confess it someday, she didn't wanted to ruin the evening just yet.

Luckily Will noticed there was something more, he didn't know exactly what was it but he chose not to pressure Eleven anymore so he tried a different solution; he spotted Max and Lucas only a couple feet away from them dancing really close and looking into each other's eyes with tenderness.

"El, believe me you have nothing to be afraid of and, if you don't believe me then turn around and see for yourself."

And so she did, immediately noticing how Lucas and that girl looked

at each other with so much love that she realized it was the same look she and Mike gave to each other. If she needed any other proof than those heart eyes she could trust on the kiss they shared.

"Oh..."

"I know!" Will laughed and put an arm on El's shoulder, walking back to their table. "Those two are even worst than you guys. Look, I don't know why you were jealous of Max but if you can give her a chance you'll find she is actually quite nice. I mean sure, she has some rude manners but we all do, Mike didn't like her at first, he is beginning to know her and accept her as a part of the group mainly because he knows how Lucas feels about her."

El nodded, pondering about what Will said and taking seriously the evidence in front of her. Maybe she overreacted, it wouldn't be the first time; poor Hopper he knew that better than anyone, well him and his windows.

"Take your time, El. You don't need to talk to Max tonight, all you need to know is that you have nothing to be worried about. Even if Max wanted to steal Mike, which she doesn't, you still need to understand that Mike knows where his heart is and trust me, you are the only girl for him."

Will's words came as calming as a morning breeze and lifted the weight on her shoulders caused only by her own insecurities. It was true, Mike also has a saying in all of this and as soon as she looked at their table she noticed Mike and Dustin already there with two cups of punch in each hand. His smile so sincere, his eyes sparkling and their connection so real, so infinite that Eleven knew, she just *knew* that there was no one else; Mike is hers, completely hers.

x

Even if it was normal for two friends to go and pick something to drink, Mike wasn't born yesterday and didn't even need to look at Dustin to be sure he was grinning at him the same way he did when he caught them kissing.

"Come on, man. Stop it."

Unfortunately Dustin had other things in mind; his grin only grew wider. "I sure don't know what you mean, buddy."

He sighed for what it must have been the tenth time and rolled his eyes at his friend, half sick half amused by him, even if he wouldn't admit it.

"Okay okay, stop and say what you have to say already." Mike complained as they took a plastic cup and got on the line, waiting for their turn.

"No, you stop." Dustin mocked. "Do you actually think that neither me, Lucas or Will, even Max for that matter, haven't noticed you are totally in love with El? To be honest, we never thought you'd have the guts to go and kiss her and something tells me this wasn't your first kiss."

Mike didn't answer but the smile on his lips was all Dustin needed.

"I knew it! Last year, right?" said the boy waving his hands in the air. "Damn, Lucas owes me a dollar, remind me to tell him on Monday; I don't think he has eyes or head for anyone other than..."

They both fell silent for a moment.

"Yeah, I could tell." Mike whispered, he knew his friends liked the same girl and he also knew Lucas won Max's heart already. "How you feel?"

Dustin made a gesture as if it didn't matter. "Nah, it's okay." he said and even if he didn't mean it, he knew it'll pass eventually. Besides, making fun of his friend was a lot more fun at the moment. "What matters now is how you feel? I mean if that love struck grin isn't clear enough."

"Shut up you idiot! Someone can hear you!"

"Are you serious?" huffed Dustin. "You may as well get on stage, proclaim your love for her on the microphone and no one would be surprised. You are so in love with her that I can even see the little hearts floating around you two."

"Hi there." greeted Nancy, taking the boy's cups.

Dustin winked at her and kept talking to Mike. "So, what's the plan?"

Mike couldn't stop the blush on his cheeks.

"What plan?" he asked, pretending he had no idea what he was talking about and trying his best not to look at his sister or Dustin's eyes.

"Well." Dustin begun. "I don't know much about romance but something tells me that if you like a girl and she likes you back and oh I forgot, if you kissed already then the most reasonable thing to do would be, I don't know, asking her to be your girlfriend? But again, what do I know? Let's ask someone with experience on this issue, shall we?" he offered, putting a hand on Mike's shoulder and pointing at Nancy.

"Nance, what do you think?"

"Dude, I don't need help."

"Yeah, you do." said Nancy. "What are you waiting for?"

Damn it, he really didn't want to have this talk with his older sister. "Because... Because I don't know what she'll say, okay?"

They fell silent for a moment until Dustin and Nancy started laughing outright and Mike felt so angry at them and himself for the blush on his cheeks.

"This is not funny!"

"Yes, yes it is." said the older teenager.

"My God, Mike, in which world do you live? I don't think there is a single dimension in which El could turn you down. Hell, if there's someone even more obvious than you, its her." stated Dustin, making fun but also helping his friend. "I mean come on, aside from the kissing, do you really think that a kiss was the only sign we had? Mike, when we went to visit her two weeks ago she actually threw herself onto you when she opened the door and clung on you the

entire visit. A part of me thought that she'd ask you to leave your arm on the cabin so she could keep hugging it."

Okay, Mike sort of knew these feelings went both ways but he was also afraid. He was perfectly aware that those fears were completely irrational since they were all caused by his dumb insecurities which had nothing to back on. There were no doubts that El felt the same way; he smiled behind his cup, remembering that day Dustin mentioned – the day when El and Will officially met – and how she looked at him during the entire visit.

It had been like a couple minutes before, she was clinging on him as in making sure he was real and wouldn't go anywhere. She touched his face without any other reason, she rubbed her cheek on her shoulder, she even hid her nose on the crook of his neck breathing him in literally in front of everyone and his heart kept beating hard against his ribcage he felt he was going to pass out. It was wonderful.

"I'm nervous." he finally whispered and took another sip of his punch. It was sweet and he couldn't help to think of Eleven's chap stick; it tasted like cherries, he could still taste it on his own lips.

"Mike." called Nancy, pulling him out of his thoughts. "Relax, bring her some punch and take a sit with her. Tell her how you feel."

The boy nodded but then he hesitated again. "Wait, she may not even know what dating means, how can I explain what a girlfriend/boyfriend relationship means? We haven't talked about these things since she came back and we never mentioned it on our letters."

Mike's questions were perfectly understandable but Dustin knew what to say.

"Buddy, even if she doesn't know what a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship stands for, she does know how she feels about you. Yes, she might need help with understanding the whole dating thing but believe me, if it's with you she'll know exactly what it means."

Mike fell silent again, pondering on what his friend and his sister told him, as if he was solving some calculus test and every result was correct. A new sense of confidence fell onto him and expanded like

when he lean to kiss her for the first time that night and knowing she kissed him back.

"Here." Nancy gave him a cup of punch for her. "Good luck."

x

Mike was really nervous, he never thought he would live to ask a girl to be his girlfriend. Okay, yes, he may have figure that one day he'd grow up and meet someone but it wasn't something he wished for. He used to see romantic relationships as a burden, a joke. He saw his classmates engaging 'deep' relationships from sixth grade, 'relationships' that would last a week at its best. That week would be obscenely public and too open for everyone to see, to pry into and then, just like on TV, those relationships performed some scandalous break ups as public and embarrassing as when it started. Naturally all those things only made relationships anything but appealing to Mike; he wasn't excited at the very least.

How could he? He lives with his parents, the least romantic couple in history and Nancy, he loved his sister and all but he knew and couldn't understand why she spent a year dating a boy she didn't love. He loves his sister and he liked Jonathan, sure, but Steve had proven himself to be really cool and it kinda bothers Mike what she did to him; so after all of that, after witnessing his schoolmates and his family behaviour when it came to romance, he hoped he would never fall in love.

Until he met her.

There, as she walked towards him next to Will – Mike felt really happy they were becoming friends –, he could appreciate once more all those things his grandma told him about. She used to say that he wasn't interested in romance only because he hasn't feel it but, someday, love would come, knock on his door and hit him so hard he wouldn't be able to escape from it.

'It's like being caught by a bolt of lightning, darling or being hit by a truck.' Theresa used to say. She was right, even if those analogies could most likely kill him he realized his grandmother didn't exaggerate; because when Eleven came to him and, with not a single word wrapped her

arms around his neck and buried her nose on the crook of his neck, Mike knew that every analogy his grandma used were true because he knew he would die for Eleven anytime, anywhere.

All that rejection he felt towards the kind of romance his schoolmates shared were well-funded; he rejected them all because those relationships were in no way what he was looking for. What Mike wanted was true love, a real and everlasting relationship and not a meaningless affair. He wanted El's hugs, kisses, smiles and all the butterflies in his stomach every time she smiled against his skin as he holds two cups filled with punch.

He wanted the same thing that for almost a year he was terrified to say out loud: that he had fallen in love for real and that love may never come back. He was terrified that he had found the one person he was meant to be only to live his entire life knowing he lost her but now, now he could finally say it. He could finally admit that his feelings had grown more than he ever could have think of, higher than any building, higher than clouds and deeper than any ocean. He knew his love for her could reach the furthest star in the universe and then get back to him to put a sincere smile on his lips.

The lightning that caught him, the truck running over him and every beat of his heart now belonged to one girl. It was her, Eleven, the one who gave him the honour of taking the name he gave and not only his first, but his second and third kiss and – holly shit – she started kissing his jaw repeatedly while she hugged him.

Where the fuck did she learn to do that? Damn it, that tickling, that electricity made his knees tremble and at the same time gave him as much energy that if he touched an electric socket he knew he could provide electricity to the entire planet.

"Let me help you." said Dustin, taking the cups and placing them on the table so he could hug El properly.

His face hurt, he couldn't stop smiling by how confident she felt all of the sudden, so open to show him her love and give him as many kisses as possible while placing her hands on his nape, holding him still as she made a trail of kisses from his jaw to his chin. Mike had to remind himself to keep breathing.

When Dustin gestured he and Will would leave them alone, Mike winked at him and mouthed a 'thank you' to both of them as he rubbed her back gently, enjoying every single one of those little cute kisses.

"I saw that on TV once and wanted to do it." whispered Eleven when she pulled apart, still she remained as close as possible to look at him in the eye and brush her lips on his. "I uhm, I saw a lot of things on TV."

Sure Mike knew Eleven was talking about kissing under the rain or against a wall but a little yet very adolescent part of him thought about what else she might have seen; he shook that thought away, it would do no good to think about stuff they were too young to even consider. He didn't need for his teenage mind to think about stuff that could embarrass him easily, besides he was barely learning how to deal with those things.

But her gesture was beautiful, perfect. He wanted more kisses, more of that new fondness and warmth she was so willing to give him and Mike wondered if it was a good idea teaching her about social boundaries when he was getting used to those cuddles and hugs and closeness and how she straightforwardly shows her love for him.

"I really liked it." replied Mike, his minty breath brushing against her lips as he closed his arms around her waist, the sound of his voice a joy to her ears. He could feel her trembling under his touch when he ran the tip of his fingers against the bare skin of the arm on his shoulder.

Suddenly Nancy's words and everything she felt fell onto Mike as pouring rain. In that moment Mike noticed he was growing up, evolving as he walked on the path that would inevitably turn him into a man. Now he was teenager and a girl, the most beautiful and amazing girl was hugging and kissing him in a way it gave him goose bumps. Sure they were way too young to do anything else than kissing but having Eleven there, showering him with kisses and touches on a school dance in front of everyone who could see that they were a lot more than just friends, all that overwhelmed Mike. It was true, they weren't just friends; there was no way they could ever be only good friends but he knew he had to establish their

relationship for her own sake so she could join the world without any doubts, so she could talk about him to anyone who asks without having to explain much; just a word, a label, but it means so much because Mike never wanted for her to doubt about what he is. Even if he kind of knew already which Eleven's answer would be, he still needed to pack up some courage and be a man and ask her the question that, in ten years, would become a marriage proposal.

"El, will you be my girlf...?"

"Hey Mike, you are not gonna believe what Mr. Clarke just asked!" said Lucas coming from literally nowhere and making them jump on their feet. "I was taking a picture with Max and he asked me if you were making out with your cousin!" he gasped and started laughing hysterically holding his stomach.

Okay, maybe it *was* funny and he would have laugh if the moment was different but, unfortunately, Lucas cut the moment not only Mike but also Eleven had been waiting for. Luckily Max was there and she noticed immediately the frustrated look on the young couple so, in order to protect the boy she liked from their rage she went to get Dustin and Will.

"Hey you pieces of shit, do something." Max asked as she grabbed her friends and shoved them to Lucas direction so they could prevent his death and also to win a little bit of Eleven's good side and wash up her faults, whatever they'd be.

"Oh wow, that's really funny." said Dustin as he grabbed Lucas arm and Will did the same with the other.

"Don't listen to him, guys. I think Troy put something on the punch, who knows." Will added and they took the boy away from the annoyed couple.

Mike tilted his head backwards, looking at the ceiling and sighed; if there was a perfect moment when all his courage and strength hit the boiling point it was five seconds ago and now, he was too much aware of his own insecurities. He swallowed and tried not to curse.

"Mike?"

Eleven's heavenly voice brought him back to reality. She placed her hands on his nape playing with his hair; her thumb drawing circles under his ear and he lean down finding her gorgeous eyes, her perfect smile.

His courage came back; her huge honey eyes, those soft velvet lips and the girl glowing for him guided him back to where his mind should be. Yes, he could do it.

He smiled. "El, come here, lets take a seat I... I need to talk to you."

Mike realized he had special abilities too and those were a) packing up the courage to ask what he almost asked, b) not killing Lucas, c) pull apart when she leaned for a kiss.

"Is everything okay?" asked Eleven as they went to the furthest table they could find. Anxiety washed over her, had she crossed the line? Were her kisses, the ones she practiced on her hand for two weeks, a little too much? El knew she still had a lot to learn, not only how to speak properly but also how she is supposed to behave in public. Were her cuddles and kisses something she is supposed to do only in private? Did she caused discomfort to the boy she adored? El couldn't stop thinking about what Lucas said; last year when the boys snuck her into the school they bumped into their teacher and the boys said she was Mike's cousin; but now that teacher saw him kissing said cousin so, will this bring him trouble? She hoped not, she really hoped Mike wouldn't have problems because of her since he only brought happiness into her life. He gave her life, dreams, everything she could ever wish for.

"Did I do something?" asked Eleven as she noticed him struggling whether to do something or say something or a mix of both.

Mike was there, sitting next to her, both facing one of the decorated walls; those metallic curtains with blue, white and silver stripes hanging beautifully as he holds her hand looking at everything except her eyes until she asked that last thing.

"No, no of course not." he assured her and Eleven felt relief at the confidence sensed in his words. He wandered his eyes again to the roof and his feet then licked his own lips as if trying to find a way to

say something he couldn't figure out how to say.

Except she knew; the butterflies in her tummy and the tickling she felt right before Lucas interrupted them came back again with full force, fluttering incessantly. She could almost hear them.

"You know, uhm, you know El, I kinda needed to ask you something but I don't know how to do it." Mike started. "I mean, I do know but I'm not sure you'll get what I mean when I say what I want to say and I don't know if I have to explain what I want to ask before asking you..."

Shit, he wanted to make it easy for her and he ended up doing the exact opposite. Mike felt as if he just talked for a whole hour and said absolutely nothing.

However for El, who was looking at him with endless love as Mike's blush grew from his cheeks to his ears, she couldn't stop smiling at how wonderfully sweet he is. How splendidly caring, considerate and gorgeous he is.

What did she do to deserve him?

Which superior force decided that a boy like him, a boy who was turning into a handsome young man, should like her the way she liked him? Because she knew she was quite obvious; she knew she couldn't hide it even if she tries although when the party went to visit her she thought she did. She thought she had been cautious into not showing too much but Dustin grinned at her every time she stared at Mike and well, it shouldn't surprise her that everyone else knew too since she barely let Mike alone during the entire visit. How could she not cling on his arms and touch his face and stare at him if, for almost a year, she visited him on the void but never touched him? How could she not take the opportunity to feel him when for almost a year he became white smoke only by trying to kiss him? How many times did they cry together in the void, how many times she heard him confessing his love? How many times she got mad at Hopper for keeping them apart with the promise that 'soon' would come?

El could spend the entire night wondering all sort of things except what he was for her. She knew it. She knew what he means to her;

she knew it when she made those mistakes so far away from Hawkins and his memory came to her, making her return and walk away from that group of people who only wanted to take advantage of her, but it wasn't time to think about that. El smiled, focusing on what Mike was trying to say and how she knew exactly what he was trying to ask her; he was there, rambling between an ocean of metaphors and so many things as he struggled with the question lying on the tip of his tongue.

His eyes so warm and caring wandered from hers as he explained what he tried to say only to feel shy and scared and look down at their feet again.

"You know El, sometimes two people who really like each other and feel in a certain way about each other that they don't feel about anyone else, decide to get into a relationship." Mike kept saying. "I mean, they get into a relationship with each other and no one else. But not as prisoners I mean, they still have friends and families and well, you know..."

He is so cute.

He is rambling, nervous; he even panics a little and doesn't know how to say what he wants to say because what Mike is trying to do is explain what a relationship is. El knew it wasn't because he thinks she is dumb, no; what Mike was trying to do as his caring and considerate heart considered was the right thing to do was explain what a relationship is so she could take her decision completely free. Because that's how sweet he is, because he wants her free to decide about her own life and the people with whom she wants to be with, because he wants her to do, feel and say whatever she feels like with any regrets so she can experience life and enjoy every second of it knowing she is no longer a prisoner of any kind.

Mike doesn't want her decision to be taken lightly; he would never use her or tell her to do something by making her think is the right thing – like Kali did – no; Mike wants her to know what everything means so she can use her free will as it is meant to be used. That's the reason why El adores Mike because he is so, so much more.

Eleven appreciated how careful and nervous he was because it

provided her more time too, but not to think about her answer because she knew what her answer would be; she just spent that extra time he gave her to really enjoy how much he changed from the boy he was. She admired his long eyelashes and how they looked exquisite with those deep chocolate eyes, his lips red pouty lips she loved more than waffles; she took in those infinite brown dots on his nose and cheekbones and she thought that if Mike was like the star that glows and guides a lost person to home, then he who actually gave her her first home when she was lost and scared, he is her world and those little brown dots are a sky filled with stars so, if she ever feels lost or scared El knows that whenever she needs help he'll be right there to make her feel safe again.

He means the world to her and no less.

"Sometimes when a person likes another person but as in more than a friend..." Mike kept saying, looking into her eyes, her feet and so on. "Well, there's a person who likes this other person so they decide this because they both want to become more than friends, you know? As if, of course they are friends but they also show the rest of the people that there are things only a special friend does to another special friend like holding hands and, uhm, k-kissing."

The soft touch of his hand when he said that last word sent a tickle to every bone in her body. It was like electricity flowing through their fingers as Mike drew circles on her palm and wet his lips again, trying to pack up some courage.

Maybe she should stop him and tell him to calm down; maybe she should tell him what she feels but, how? How can Eleven describe what she feels if she doesn't have enough words yet? Because saying that she likes him isn't enough, it doesn't explain the whole enormity of what he means to her and even if she had the words, would they fill the entire concept so he could understand just how much she actually loves him? Because Mike is more, so much more than saying 'I like you'; he is night after night of unceasing crying when they were apart, he is what she craved the most for over three hundred and fifty three torturous days. It was more than wanting him close, she truly *needs* him.

Mike is the feeling that she knows him since thousands of years,

something that grows, spreads and consumes her because it is so hard to believe just how suddenly he came into her life; unbelievable because it only took the touch of his hands for her to feel whole. Eleven knew she can forget about anything and lost her mind in those chocolate eyes, she knew that she could be anywhere but as long as he is with her she would always feel at home because she is his and he is hers too. Every second, every single moment Mike breathes, smiles or blinks he gives a reason to everything that could have been and everything yet to come because every love story she heard of must have found its muse on the kisses he gave her, on his long wait and how faithful he was calling for her every single night while he fought against his own pain. That, the way he hold on the hope she'd return made him so unreal and yet so true, a dream or a wish she could touch because he waited for her. He is this crazy feeling, something so big that distance couldn't break them apart but instead, it brought them closer, stronger to realize their feelings for each other were unfathomable.

She knew that every moment of her life, even the years she was locked up were worth it because that was the plan; he was meant to find her, to rescue her, he was meant to become the boy who would show her the life she had been dreaming about and Eleven knows that living without him is no life at all.

As for Mike, who was starting to sweat like a false witness and whose nerves had reached the boiling point had lost again the courage to speak and messed up his own words.

"Then these two people that were friends and are still friends but a new kind of friends that became something called boyfriend and girlfriend that interacts... Uhm, in a way that... *Oh God*, they kiss and..."

"Mike." Eleven stopped him between amused and moved by the beauty he brings with his caring way of expressing his love, for the love itself he gives. She also stooped him because she was also afraid he might faint too and because she wanted to tell him he never needed to explain what a boyfriend and girlfriend relationship was. She knew, after all she spends the entire day watching every soap opera on TV and aside from the drama and the people falling down the stairs, the main topic on most of these is romance.

"Uh yeah?" he asked, blinking a couple times as she pulled him out from his monologue about dating which, honestly, was a bit useless.

El smiled and held his hands firmly. "Yes."

"Y-yes... Yes for, w-what?" he practically squeaked in shock, panic and the most amazing kind of love.

El couldn't contain her joy. "Yes to what you are trying to ask me. You don't need to explain what dating means, Mike. TV showed me that, I know what it means and I want it."

The fire inside the boy's chest grew so fast he could almost hear his cheeks blushing so unbelievably pink as El started to lean closer to him.

He brushed his finger through his hair. "I'm sorry El I, I probably worry too much." Mike admitted, a smile on his lips as he began to chill.

"You do." El said and stroked his cheek with her fingers. "That's why."

He swallowed hard, his smile rapidly growing as his courage jumped and he felt brave and powerful all thanks to the honesty and warmth her honey eyes provided. He could finally do it, the words coming out loud and clear.

He cupped her cheek as he caressed a cute dimple with his thumb. So beautiful it hurts, so magical it astonishes him, so perfect it fills him.

"El, will you be my girlfriend?"

The happiness Eleven felt had no comparison and it couldn't be measured; she became a whole mess of joy, tears and words tangled with the lump in her throat.

"Yes Mike, a million times yes." she cried out as her arms clung on his shoulders and they shared a tight hug which became a new kiss and another and another and another one until Dustin threw a dirty napkin on their heads and told them to knock it off and join the dance.

"Five... more... minutes." asked Mike in between kisses.

El giggled at every kiss. She said goodbye to her friends fifteen minutes ago when Mike's clock warned them her curfew would soon begun. After they became girlfriend and boyfriend officially they spend the rest of their night dancing and joking around with the party, which was fun even when their friends kept mocking them on their new relationship and making kisses noises. Lucas had to pay Dustin a dollar and he had to pay Will said dollar, and then they went to Jonathan for a picture and another with the party all together, even Max.

El enjoyed every second of it; the beginning of a new life, a real life filled with friends that assured they'll go visit soon and even harass Hopper until he allows them to. A new life that in only a couple months she would enjoy as a free human being, ready to walk around the town and see everything the couldn't at the moment but it was there, waiting for her and she was ready for it. She was so ready to explore and see places and run around and laugh and go to the movies and experience all of that with her boyfriend holding her hand.

Yeah, her *boyfriend*, the one she would kiss in every chance she gets from now on, as she was doing at the moment.

"I want to but Hopper said if I take more time then no eggo's for a week." El said although she didn't even try to let go of Mike's mouth. Unfortunately she didn't know when her new father would let her see him again but she would insist non-stop and drive him crazy if she must until he lets Mike go to the cabin because those kisses became more important than breathing.

"I'll bring you ten boxes." Mike said and they smiled in their kiss which lingered even when they heard a group of kids whistling and cheering near them, but they couldn't care less.

"Mmhh..." El suddenly winces when someone opened the gymnasium door and a cold December breeze hit her pretty but no-very-warm dress.

Mike, as always, noticed. "Oh shit, you need your coat. Where is it?" he asked as she shivered in her arms and when the door went opened again he rubbed his hands on her arms, trying to warm her up.

El bit her lip. "I left it in the car."

Another student opened the gymnasium door and another new breeze hit both of them. Mike was concerned.

"You'll get sick if you get out like this, El, even if it's only to the car." he said, rubbing his hands on her bare arms, trying keep his girlfriend warm. He couldn't help but smile, it felt so good to know that she was now his *girlfriend*, maybe he'd celebrate by jumping on the bed later.

"Hopper said he'll be nearby."

But then El shivered once more when another kid left and Mike noticed a bit of snow in the wind.

"Wait, I know!" said the boy and just like that he took off his jacket and then the sweater underneath it. "Here, I won't have my girl getting sick if I can do something about it."

For a moment Eleven's brain shut down and a butterfly's bomb exploded in her stomach as an intense tingle spread to every inch of her body. *There*, it could be silly to anyone else but Mike, who didn't take a moment to think what his gesture would mean to her and with no hesitation whatsoever, only prompted by the eternal sweetness of being a boy who gives his sweater to his girlfriend to keep her from getting a cold; all of that rocked Eleven to her very core.

She couldn't even say a single word.

"..." no, she couldn't. She just looked back into Mike's eyes, her boyfriend's eyes and still couldn't believe how this wonderful boy is her boyfriend. El could do nothing more than to accept his sweater.

The memory of a twelve year old boy who took off his jacket under the pouring rain to put it on her shoulders with no questions asked; the memory of a sweet boy picking up clothes from a basket of clean laundry and offering it to her because it was the right thing to do, it

all fell on Eleven as she took in again how amazed she felt. It was thanks to a kid who kept her safe and warm because his heart, as pure as it is, couldn't take any other option than to protect someone in need.

Was that a sign? Eleven believed it was as she felt his smile in his voice when he helped her putting on the sweater so she wouldn't mess up her hairdo or the pretty make up she was wearing. Maybe that night when Mike gave her his own clothes was a presage or a clue of what this night would become; the first step that'd lead to the kisses they shared, the songs they danced, the softness of their hands or the warmth from Mike's dark eyes. Those eyes, those dark pools that shook her to her very roots and made her feel so incredibly, endlessly, stupidly happy that when she looked up again she knew the comfort and balmy joy surrounding her could either come from her boyfriend's sweater or the love bubbling from within.

El suddenly couldn't hold his gaze. Mike held her in her arms as her shy smile grew thanks to his presence and she tried to figure out what to say or how to proceed or talk to him so she can explain how much happiness he brought into her life from the moment she realized he was going to ask her to be his girlfriend. He was so sweet trying to explain her what it was before even asking her, as if she didn't know; as if Eleven hadn't spent a year watching five soap operas a day, as if she didn't practiced kissing in her hand when Hopper explained what a kiss was and those kisses are something people usually shared when they are together and in love.

Yes, she still had a lot to learn, like when she told her new father that Mike kissed her already and she couldn't understand why his cheeks turned all shades of pink. Maybe she still need to develop her social abilities and get used to formalities that seemed so alien but, if there was something Eleven was completely sure about was that Mike in any scenario, in every way, in a year or an eternity would always be the one she belongs with. The right answer, the destination, the one made for her.

Only for being himself, only for being Mike, because he offered his clothes on a rainy night, because he built her a home with sheets, pillows and a sleeping bag. Because he called her for three hundred and fifty three days and since she came back he sends her letters in

ever chance he has. It was all thanks to him why Eleven dreamed day and night with building a life with him so the future they have ahead of them could always find them together so El could offer Mike her heart just like he trusted his to her.

"There, all set. Sorry, it's little too big for you but..."

"Is perfect." El interrupted, touching the edge of the wooden blue sweater and then sniffing its collar and finding a mixture of detergent, soap, perfume and Mike's unmistakeable scent. That night she would wear that sweater in bed as if he was there holding her while she sleeps. "You are perfect."

And now it was Mike's turn to be speechless.

She thinks he is perfect? He was the one who should tell her she is the perfect one, that no matter what may happen he knew his feeling could only grow bigger and wider and motivate him to become a great man. She is perfect because that's exactly how Mike dreamed her; the key that opened every existing door, the honey eyes he adores, the future crystal clear as he felt so wonderfully blessed to be able to walk into that future holding her hand. Eleven is perfect because he wouldn't change a single hair in her head.

But he was overjoyed, maybe too overwhelmed to talk and all he could do was hug her as tight as he could, smile when she nuzzled her nose on his neck as they swayed like if they were dancing again.

Mike couldn't believe his luck. He watched spellbound as Eleven sniffed his sweater and his heart forgot it had to keep beating, his mouth forgot how to speak, music around them forgot it was supposed to be listened and the world forgot it should keep spinning. She stopped his world and the world entire wouldn't dare to function until Mike's brain cells start connecting again. No, he wasn't perfect, he was simply the luckiest of them both because, when Eleven looked into his eyes again, Mike knew he wasn't supposed to speak because he had to use his lips to kiss her once more. An explosion of colours, shades and sparks in every dimension of a world stopped by two kids who spent nights and days missing each other, calling each other; two kids who with every brush from their joined lips became teenagers. Because they were growing together, because they were

together. Because they fit perfectly like pieces of a complete puzzle.

The way she looks at him made Mike feel invincible, as if he was a treasure. Eleven made him feel incredible, incomparable, irreplaceable and so powerful he knew he could do everything as long as she is there.

Mike would do anything for her.

"I don't want to go, I'll miss you." whispered Eleven on his lips; their foreheads touching, their eyelashes caressing each other's skin.

Mike smiled. "I'll go even if Hopper doesn't let me. Screw his rules, I can be invisible if I have to but I'll visit you. We'll all go, I promise."

El smiled again; a comforting and trusting promise that she could go to sleep that night because she knew it was true, because Mike said 'promise' and she knew she has nothing to worry about.

"Come on, I'll walk you to Hopper's car." said Mike and gave her another peck as he held her hand and went to the door. The Chief should be on the parking lot waiting for her and probably a little pissed since it was past nine but he'd take the responsibility.

But El didn't move and Mike looked at her, still glued to the floor.

"El, are you okay?"

The girl simply looked around her, the kids dancing; the colours decorating the gym, the smells she couldn't describe and their friends dancing somewhere near their table. A new life giving her its welcome, opportunities waiting, a beautiful boy holding her hand and looking at her with those big heart eyes.

She touched the sweater again, a smile on her lips, a question on the tip of her tongue.

"Mine?"

Mike nodded. "Yeah, sure, you can keep it. It looks way cuter in you anyway."

"No." murmured El, taking a hand to Mike's chest where she could feel his heartbeat and then up to his chin, caressing his bottom lip with her thumb. "You, are you mine now?"

Eleven's dreamy smile made him tremble and he didn't care how mad the Chief would get; Mike would wake up early, buy every box of Eggo's he can afford and go to share breakfast with her because her smile didn't give him any choice, he didn't even want another choice.

His friends were right, maybe people can see hearts coming out of them like in cartoons. He hoped everyone could see it.

Mike smiled, choking on his own words, cupping her cheeks before kissing her again.

"Yes El. I'm yours, forever."

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hi again!

So, the reason why I couldn't publish sooner and why the translation took me a lot longer than expected is a mixture of things. I mentioned before I was starting a course after work which would take some of my time. Also, and this is something I didn't know if I should share or not, I had many health issues. I am not the healthiest person, I'm very delicate and sometimes these problems come for a while to kick me in the butt, suck on all my strength. I'm recovering and well, I'm so sorry for this many months delay.

Please guys leave a comment and pay attention to the first author note above so there won't be any doubts about where the upcoming stories will be set. Here down you can vote what is the next chapter you want for this one, which would come after ch2 of TAKE MY HAND, coming real soon since its almost done on the Spanish version.

Here's the list to vote:

: DANCE WITH ME - 2007

: LEMONADE - 1988

: *WHY ME?* - 1998

: *EVERY DAY, EVERY HOUR* - 1989

: *PROMISE* - 1993

: *MY GIRL* - 1993

: *PRIORITIES* - 1990

: *THE ONLY ONE* - 2008

: *YOU* - 1984

: *A LITTLE FREEDOM* – 1984

: *MOONLIGHT MAGIC* - 2008

*Remember English isn't my first language so I apologize for the mistakes. If you want to ask me stuff, scold me if I take too long or anything, my instagram is celes_genesis and, like always please if you enjoyed the chapter PLEASE leave here a nice big **review**. It only takes a sec.*

Love you all, happy season 3 to everyone and lets make the kids feel loved and appreciated too :)